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ALLAN HAYWOOD.

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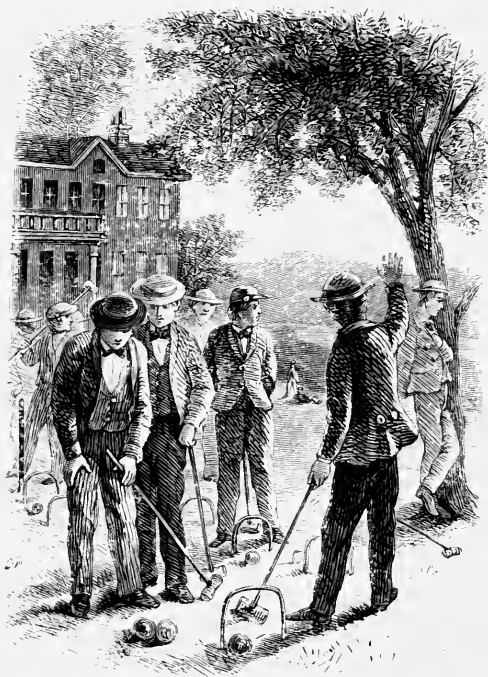
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ROBERT CARTER AND BROTHERS,

*New York.*



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# ALLAN HAYWOOD.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

THE "GOLDEN-LADDER" SERIES, "LITTLE KATY AND JOLLY  
JIM," ETC.



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## ALLAN HAYWOOD.

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### I.

#### DRAYTON BOYS.

“COME, Allan, come! How long do you mean to keep us waiting?”

The words were spoken in a very impatient tone by a boy who stood, croquet-mallet in hand, among a group of his school-mates on the lawn which fronted the long-established institution known through all the country round as “Drayton Hall.” The afternoon sun was throwing long shadows across the grass, warning the croquet-players that if their game were not soon ended the supper-bell would summon them indoors before they could decide which side was to bear away the palm of victory. It had been a hotly contested game, and perhaps this was



the reason of Will Seaton's impatient call; for his broad, laughing face was not wont to wear that look of annoyance.

The boy addressed, a tall, slight young fellow who had been leaning thoughtfully against a tree, started suddenly, almost as if wakened from sleep, at his companion's summons.

"I beg your pardon," he said, hastily catching up the mallet which lay on the grass at his feet. "I believe my wits were wool-gathering."

"If you would attend to your affairs instead of dreaming away your life, you might be able to do something," said the sharp voice of Arthur Bentley, who, standing beside him, looked at him as he spoke with an expression of unconcealed contempt.

The rude speech was unanswered save by a good-humored smile as Allan sprang toward his ball.

As he struck it into position it touched





that of Arthur Bentley, which lay directly in front of the wicket through which Allan's must pass. It was a fine stroke, for his ball had been croqueted far out of line, and a loud shout showed his comrades' appreciation of his skill.

"Your dreamer has done pretty well, Arthur," said the merry voice of Will Seaton. "I wouldn't wonder if he were quite wide awake now," he added, as Allan, with an apparently light stroke, sent his opponent's ball to the limit of the ground.

A dark cloud gathered on Bentley's brow at the laugh which followed these words; and, when, a moment later, his turn came to play, he glanced toward Allan with a look which drew from Seaton another sally.

"Don't give play to private vengeance here, Arthur," he said mischievously. "Wait till you catch him alone, and then thrash him. You're big enough."

Only those who stood very near caught the



words, but they raised another laugh; for Bentley, a square-shouldered, powerful fellow, would have been more than a match for three or four such slender boys as Allan Haywood. Perhaps he was not to be blamed for feeling some irritation with his tormentor, but he revenged himself upon an innocent victim.

Taking direct aim for Haywood's position, by a stroke as skilful as that of his adversary, he struck his ball. "Bravo" rang out from a dozen voices; but when Arthur placed his foot upon his own ball, and with a blow of tremendous force sent Allan's not only beyond the limits, but rolling down to the foot of the hill upon whose summit Drayton Hall stood sentinel, a murmur of disapprobation ended in loud cries of, "Shame!" "Unfair!" from both parties of the combatants.

"I'll have it up again before my turn comes," said Haywood, starting in pursuit. "Don't wait for me."

But a hand was laid on his arm, and a low



voice said, "Stop. Don't you see that he means to spoil your game. He knows you can't make a good play after running up the hill. I'll go;" and the speaker sprang away at a pace which promised a speedy return of Allan's property.

He was not one of the players, but arm in arm with a companion had sauntered upon the lawn just in time to be a witness to Arthur's ungenerous act. Looking into that bright, honest face, with its broad, open brow, and clear blue eyes, you are not surprised by the flash of indignation which has frightened away the fun and frolic which usually dance so merrily there. It is just the face which you would expect to see darken in resentment at the sight of a small, mean deed. Swiftly running up the hill again, he paused when at some distance from the croquet-ground, and with a light toss threw the ball just within the limits.

"Well done for Ned Churchill!" shouted



one of the lookers-on; and with a nod of response to Haywood's thanks, Churchill rejoined the friend with whom he had been walking.

"You look as black as a thunder-cloud, Ned," said his comrade, as Edward linked his arm in his once more, and they recommenced their saunter.

"I do despise that fellow Bentley!" returned Churchill, hotly. "There isn't a boy in the school for whom I have such a perfect contempt. He knew as well as I did that Haywood would be unfit for play after running up that hill."

"Isn't he good for as small a climb as that?" asked the other. "What ails him?"

"I don't know. He says, 'Nothing,' and laughs at me when I try to persuade him to see a doctor. But there must be something wrong, for he can't make any exertion without growing as faint and pale as any girl, and more than once I have seen him press



his hand on his chest, and bite his lips as if he were choking back a cry. Bentley has noticed it too. Only yesterday I heard him chaffing Al about his 'maidenly sensibility' as he called it. He got as good as he gave though. Al can fight his own battles when it comes to a war of words. If he isn't as burly as Bentley, he has more brains in one hair of his head than that bully has in his whole cranium."

"Where now?" interrupted his friend, as Churchill drew him from the lawn into the carriage-road.

"Down to the gate. My sister is coming over with a package for me this afternoon, and I promised to be at the gate to take it, so that Thomas need not leave the horses. She dislikes to drive in just at this time when the fellows are all out here, and she could not come earlier. There is the carriage now, turning the fork. Come on, Larry; and I will introduce you to the gayest little sister a fellow was ever blessed with."



It was not a girlish face which looked out of the carriage-window as the boys approached, nor yet a pretty face ; but it was one that you could love and trust completely. The mouth was large and not quite straight, but then it could smile so winningly that one forgot that it would have been more beautiful if it had been a trifle smaller ; and if her nose were rather short, that pair of soft brown eyes looking out over it made up for all its deficiencies, they were so bright and so full of love and gentleness. Yet they could flash too, those soft brown eyes. If any harm threatened the boy now leaning against the carriage-door, those smiling lips could set themselves very firmly, and those gentle eyes darken into sternness in a moment. But that was *for* him, never *toward* him. Edward Churchill had never yet seen any thing but love looking out at him from the windows of his sister's heart.

Mary Churchill had travelled on from girl-



hood to "the happiest old-maidenhood that spinster ever enjoyed," as she wrote to her uncle only a day or two ago; yet she had not grown old either. Her face always did wear that serious, rather matured expression when it was in repose; and now when she bent her head courteously toward Laurence Bronson, as her brother introduced his friend, the same sweet smile which had won so many hearts to her in her younger days played about her mouth, chaining Laurence also to her chariot wheels.

"Can you not persuade your friend to spend the coming Saturday with you, Ned?" asked his sister. "It will never do," she added, turning to Laurence, "for me to be a stranger to such a dear friend of my brother's. May I send up my horse for you when the coachman brings up Ned's pony?"

Most certainly she might; for how could such an invitation, so given, be refused? Laurence bowed and smiled his thanks, and



then the tea-bell ringing out its, for once, unwelcome summons, Thomas was ordered to drive on, and the boys turned back toward the Hall.

“ Well, Allan, what luck ? ” asked Churchill, as, reaching the door, they met the croquet-players coming in with the excitement of the game still strong upon them, if one were to judge from the animated manner in which it was discussed.

“ Pretty good,” said Allan. “ Lights won.”

“ No, pretty *bad* : lights won,” burst in Will Seaton. “ It was a good game though, if the other side did beat ; well-matched all the way through, and ending in a glorious scrimmage. Bentley was our chief, and a rover, and the rest of us were all coming up nicely, thinking we’d surely have them, for Sam Hilton, one of Al’s fellows, was far behind, when Al dashed in among us, sent us all to Coventry, and kept us there, spite of all we could do, till Sam came through. Bentley fought Sam





hard, and did him damage lots of times, but Al kept the rest of us off, and at last sent Bentley himself down to the other stake, put Sam through, and then gracefully retired amid the huzzas of an admiring audience!"

"We thought there must be some fine play going on," said Laurence. "We heard you shouting down at the road."

"Yes: I couldn't help shouting as if I were a light myself, it was so splendid. But I could have switched him for disappointing us so. Never mind, we'll pay you off yet, old fellow," he added, turning to Allan as they entered the dining-room, and enforcing his threat with a resounding slap on the shoulder, which called forth a sharp reprimand from the usher who stood at the head of the table; but the mischievous smile with which Will turned to Arthur, asking him if he should yield him his seat beside Allan, did not seem to indicate that the sternness of the reproof



had in any way affected the overflow of his wild spirits.

Perhaps there was not among the three hundred boys who composed the school at Drayton Hall any two who offered in their whole character and appearance a stronger contrast than Arthur Bentley and William Seaton. The one loud, boisterous, ripe for any species of mischief, yet with a heart true and strong as oak, the boon companion of all the school scapegraces, while he was at the same time loved and welcomed by all the more orderly of his companions; the other dark, stern, and passionāte, disliked by the one class for his reticence and taciturnity, and by the other for perhaps no better reason than that given in the old ballad: —

“I do not like you, Dr. Fell,  
The reason why I cannot tell.”

And yet these two were close friends. In spite of all Will's merciless banter and teasing, he was the only boy in the Hall for whom



Arthur showed one spark of affection; and, on the other hand, all Bentley's ill-humor, flashes of passion, and fits of moodiness were overlooked and borne with by Seaton in a manner totally at variance with his general character.

No small amount of teasing fell to Seaton's share on Arthur's account, but he was quite able to sustain his part in any such conflict; and when, as sometimes happened, those whose opinions had more weight with him wondered at the strange friendship, he would answer laughingly, "Oh! Bentley does well enough if you take the trouble to get through the top-crust. I can't help liking him, he's so spicy when he's real mad; and besides if he is kind of ugly, what you do get out of him is the real stuff."

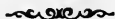
And so, in spite of remonstrances from those who disliked to see their wild but noble-hearted comrade hand in glove with one whom they did not trust, and the jeers and tricks of those



to whom the intimacy was a standing joke, Will held fast by his unpopular chum, and laughter and persuasion fell alike unheeded on his ear.

He had hardly had a fair chance in life, this unloving and unloved boy. Early left to the care of ignorant servants, he had grown from babyhood to boyhood, uncontrolled and ungoverned, his fiery temper fostered by alternate indulgence and harsh restraint, and his tyrannical and overbearing disposition strengthened by constant companionship with those over whom he held the place of master. But in his eighth year all this had been suddenly changed. An unfortunate speculation ruined his father; and in a fit of desperation Mr. Bentley sold his beautiful home, and sent his wife and two sons to a brother living in Boston, while he went to seek a new fortune in California.

Their welcome at the North was not a very cordial one; and poor Mrs. Bentley, a weak



and feeble woman at the best, soon sank beneath the weight of her griefs, and the two boys were left alone in their strange home. Ronald, the elder brother, too proud to accept favors from a grudging hand, left his uncle's house shortly after his mother's death, and worked his way through school and college, until by the mere force of his industry and determined will he had completed his education, and obtained a high position in the school of Dr. Drayton, one of his former professors.

During all the years of his absence Arthur had lived on in his uncle's family, knowing himself, child as he was, barely tolerated there, and feeling most bitterly every slight and coldness shown him. Severely punished for every outbreak of his hot temper, he had learned not to control, but to hide it, while it only burned the deeper in his heart for being shut up within him, making him each day more sullen and morose. So, when



his brother, able now to support both himself and Arthur, took him under his own care, he found him what we have already seen him, a perfect Ishmael, "his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him." And Roland Bentley was as unwise a guide for such a character as the boy could well have had. His own disposition had been soured and embittered by his hard struggle with the world; and his brother's faults were encouraged and fixed by finding all their types in Roland, his pattern and paragon.

## II.

### CHURCHILL MANOR HOUSE.

MARY and Edward Churchill had been left orphans when she was but fourteen years old, and he a little infant over whose young head only five suns had risen and set. Well could the boy remember the all-absorbing story of his father's violent death, followed almost immediately by that of his mother, which had been told and retold in his childish days by his old nurse, as he sat upon her knee, listening in rapt silence to the sad story.

They had soon been left, these two, almost alone in the old homestead which had been for generations known through all the country round as the Churchill Manor House. For when Ned had grown to be a sturdy boy of four years old, Mr. Henry Churchill, their



father's brother, to whose guardianship they had been confided, had been forced by his business relations to leave home for China, expecting to remain there for one year only. But the death of one of the firm having made it necessary for him to prolong his residence in that country, twelve years had now passed since he had seen his brother's children.

To be sure there was "Aunt Milly," who had been left nominal matron of the establishment at his departure; but Miss Millicent Gray was one of those quiet old ladies who never interfere in any way with those around them, and whose absence from their usual haunts is felt rather as the loss of some old familiar piece of furniture than as that of an active, living presence. If her knitting and embroidery-frame were unmolested, dinner on the table at the appointed time, and a novel at hand over which she might lose herself in an after-dinner nap, the world might in all things else move on as it saw fit: Miss





Millicent's hand or voice would never be lifted to change its course. Well was it for Mary that she possessed a good share both of self-reliance and common sense, and better still, that in the little vine-clad parsonage, not a quarter of a mile away, she had two faithful advisers and loving friends.

Churchill Manor House was as pleasant a place to visit as could well be chosen. Certainly Laurence Bronson proved it so on the Saturday following his introduction to its mistress. The old house itself was a study. Built more than a century ago, and added to from time to time by different members of the family, it had grown to be a spacious but rambling and irregular building, with wide halls opening into large, handsome rooms, and narrow entries leading one into all sorts of out-of-the-way nooks and crannies.

A very museum of a house it was. One great room, whose windows opened toward the sea, whose waves thundered against the



cliffs not half a mile away, being filled with every kind of ocean-treasure, and curiosities from foreign lands gathered during years of sea-life by an old-times Churchill, who had been an Admiral in the British navy, and had gone peacefully to his rest without a suspicion that his descendants would live and die beneath another flag. Another room contained the arms used by the Churchills from time immemorial. Old-fashioned swords, daggers, battle-axes, and cutlasses rested against the walls, side by side with fire-arms ranging from the old blunderbuss and firelock down to Colt's revolvers and Sharp's rifles. On one side of the room hung suits of armor, one of them dating back to 1415, when, on the battle-field of Agincourt, Edward Churchill, the first of the name who had ever borne a title, was knighted by King Henry for his bravery; for before that time the Churchills had been but sturdy English yeomen, earning their bread by hardy toil.



But even these rooms, interesting as they were to all Ned's friends, failed to draw Laurence from the old gallery where hung portraits of the Churchills, from those of the present day back to the brave old soldier whose shoulders had felt the stroke of King Henry's trenchant blade. Mary had been called away to see a poor woman who had applied to her for aid; and the two boys, after going the rounds of the house, had, at Laurence's suggestion, established themselves in the gallery to await the luncheon-bell, which Mary had promised them should ring early, in order that they might have a long afternoon to spend on the lake which lay at the foot of the broad lawn stretching away before the house.

“What a grand, noble face that is!” said Laurence, pointing to the portrait of the old yeoman, which hung at the upper end of the hall. “He looks as if he might spend his life in doing battle for the right.”



“Yes : he is a brave-looking old fellow,” said Ned, throwing himself down in a very lazy attitude beside his companion, who was seated on a lounge. “But there’s my favorite.”

Laurence turned to look at the picture to which Ned referred. It was the portrait of a revolutionary officer. An old man, doubtless, for the high cocked hat rested on a head whose hair was white as snow ; but the erect, martial figure, the piercing eye, and the firm hand grasping the heavy sword, said plainly that the old soldier’s strength to do and dare was as yet undiminished.

“Isn’t he a soldier ?” said Ned, admiringly. “I do love that man. There isn’t a picture in the hall that we value as much as his,—with the exception of those,” he added, his voice falling somewhat, as he motioned toward two small miniatures which hung against the wall directly in front of them.

“My father and my mother,” he said gently, as Laurence looked inquiringly towards him.



"They died on the same day, did they not?" asked his friend.

"Yes, when I was a very young baby. You should hear my old nurse tell the story. I think she loved my mother as well as if she had been her own child. There she is now, that mulatto woman passing the window. Poor Lailie! her strength is pretty much gone. She is a feeble old woman now, but her love for any one who bears the name of Churchill is as strong as ever."

There was a knock upon the door; and in answer to Ned's "Come in," the turbaned head which had just passed the window appeared.

"Thomas wants to know if you could spare a few moments to him, Mr. Edward. He's in a little trouble, and needs your help."

"I can amuse myself here easily," said Laurence, quickly, as Ned hesitated. "I have a fancy for pictures, and shall enjoy



examining these. Don't make company of me."

"Very well: I shall not be long away," said Ned, rising. "By the way, Lailie," he added, turning to the old woman, "I knocked down that little cast this morning, and broke it to atoms. Just take away the pieces with you."

Directing her to the mantel-piece upon which lay the fragments of a small plaster cast, he went out; while Laurence, glad to be able to study the miniatures at his leisure, leaned forward to look at the lovely face before him. The sweet mouth seemed to smile upon him as he gazed at it, and the soft eyes to look into his with a strange tenderness. Where had he seen that look before? Yes, he knew it now: he had caught it in Ned's face at times. He had seen it only yesterday, when he had been speaking of Allan Haywood. But the boy's every other feature had been inherited from the face



which hung beside his mother's. The broad, high forehead, the firm mouth, the very set of the head upon the shoulders, were all the fac-similes of the companion miniature.

As Laurence sat looking at the two pictures, he heard a slight sound beside him, and glancing up saw old Lailie standing near.

"You was looking at the mistress, young master," she said, dropping a curtsey.

"Yes," said Laurence: "it is a beautiful face. And Mr. Churchill must have been a very handsome man. They tell me," he added, wishing to draw her on to tell the story to which Ned had referred, "that they died within a few hours of each other."

"And so they did, sir; and a sad day it was for us all. If I might make so bold as to tell you how it was, sir, it might pass away the time till Mr. Edward comes back."

"I should be very glad to hear the story," said Laurence. "Sit down and tell it to me."



With another low curtsey, the old woman obeyed. Sitting close beside the pictures, her dark, wrinkled face, with its crisp curls of snow-white hair escaping from the confines of her gay turban, forming a strange contrast to the fair countenance of her dead mistress, she folded her hands upon her spotless apron, and began the story which she never tired of relating.

“ Well, sir, it was one nice, sunshiny day, very like this. The mistress had been a long while sick, a many months indeed; and I’d had the care of her all the while. You see I was born in the house, my mother having been Mr. Churchill’s nurse when he was a small little bit of a baby; and I’d lived there ever since, doing any thing I could while I was a child, then being nurse-girl, and at last head-nurse myself. When Miss Mary was born, I had the whole charge of her; for it was only a short while after that, that the mistress got consumpted, and couldn’t do





much herself. So you can see how it came about that the dear lady was in my care at all times when the master had to be away. Well, as I was saying, it was the beautifullest day I'd seen in a long while. I'd been sitting upstairs with the mistress, and she'd sent me down to the kitchen for some wine-whey. It was the only thing we could get her to eat,—wine-whey; and she wouldn't have nobody make it but just me. She had very few notions for one who'd been so long ailing; but that one she had, she'd touch nobody's whey but mine. I was coming up the stairs with it in my hand, when who should I meet but the master; and it just made my heart ache to look at him, he seemed that worn and weary. For weeks and weeks, he'd never had a quiet night's rest; for he'd never let any one tend the mistress o' nights but himself, and it was wearing the life out of him. They was always looking out for each other, them two; the mistress always trying to



seem better and stronger when he was by, and the master speaking up so gay and cheery when he spoke to her, never mind how tired he might be. But, dear me! we all saw through it easy enough; and I guess they both saw through it too, only they never said a word.

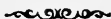
“ Well, as I was saying, I met the master on the stairs. I knew there’d be no use in asking him to rest for his own sake; but all of a sudden I thought of another plan; and says I, ‘ Master, don’t you think Miss Mary ought to go out for a walk? She’s looking pale and thin. ’Tain’t any use for me to advise her; but if you’d ask her to go for company to you, she’d do it.’

“ His face changed all in a minute. ‘ She does look very pale: I remember noticing it this morning,’ he said. ‘ I have neglected her, poor child, in my anxiety for her mother. A ride will do her good. Tell Henry to saddle the horses while I call Miss Mary;’ and he



turned off with his quick step towards her room. I laughed to myself, as I went to give Henry his orders; but, oh! I didn't laugh again that day.

"I'd been in the mistress' room a full half hour, when I heard Mr. Churchill's voice in the hall, calling out, 'Come, little bird, the horses are very impatient!' Mrs. Churchill told me to go to Miss Mary, and see if I could help her; but as I closed the door after me, Miss Mary came out of her room all ready. She looked so pretty and bright in her habit and cap, that I wondered at myself for thinking she seemed pale and tired; but I'd set master off, and that was enough. Mistress was lying very still, so I went down to see them start, for I hadn't had my head outside the door for more than two weeks. I ran down the stairs after Miss Mary, to take a look at master, and see if the thought of a ride did him as much good as it did her.



“The hall door was open, and he sat right before it on his horse. He was a very handsome man, was master; and sitting there, with his shoulders thrown back, and his face all aglow with holding Hunter, who was dancing and prancing, and trying as hard as a horse could to throw him, he looked just beautiful. I saw Miss Mary’s color come as she caught sight of him, and she called out so merry, ‘Oh, what a gay horseman! I’m proud of my handsome cavalier!’ Master took off his hat and made a low bow, just like he was a fine young gentleman come courting of Miss Mary. And then—and then—I never rightly knew how it happened, whether the sweep of his hat startled Hunter, or what it was, but the creature reared till he seemed to stand straight on his hind feet, and then fell over backward, with the master under him. Oh, it was an awful sight!

“I don’t know whether we all thought of



mistress then or not; but no one screamed or called out. I heard a strange, choked sort of cry; and Miss Mary rushed past me, and I saw her kneel down close to that frantic, plunging horse, and look into her father's face. The men, Henry and Thomas, had Hunter up in another minute; but they never laid a hand on master, they didn't dare. Miss Mary sat there, staring, staring, as if she would never lift her eyes from his face; and we was all afraid to go near to her, there was such an awful look in her eyes. There was nothing dreadful to see in poor master. His face hadn't been touched: it was only very, very white; but his poor chest was all crushed in. We could see that as he lay on the grass with his head in Miss Mary's lap: she had laid it there when she first knelt down beside him. After a bit, she roused herself quite sudden-like.

“‘Why do you stand here?’ she said, speaking out loud and clear. ‘Henry, take



Fellie and ride for Dr. Brainerd. Thomas, call John, and carry Mr. Churchill into the house. Lailie, go up to my mother. Tell her I will be with her in a few minutes. Go softly, she may be asleep.'

"It seemed too strange to believe : that bit of a girl, fourteen years old, ordering us all around so strong and woman-like, and even thinking of keeping her sick mother asleep if she could. But, oh ! there wasn't no sleep for the mistress. That's another thing we'll never know, — why she got up, and how she ever walked to that window. But when I went in, there she was sitting at the window, where she could see every thing ; and she had seen every thing.

"I gave a scream when I saw her, — such a scream that poor Miss Mary left her father, and rushed upstairs. But the mistress only held out her hand, and said, with a sweet, curious smile, 'Don't be frightened, good Lailie. I shall go to him !' And when Miss



Mary came in, and knelt down by her without speaking a single word, mistress wrapped her arms around her and held her very close and tender, whispering softly, 'Only a little while apart; only a little while!'

"After a minute, Miss Mary said, 'Lailie will take care of you, mother: father may want me.' And she only smiled that strange little smile again, and just opened her arms, and let her go.

"I asked her would she go back to her bed, and she said, 'Yes.' So I lifted her in my arms, as I'd often done before when the master wasn't at hand, and carried her across the room, and laid her on the bed. Pretty soon the doctor came: I heard him walk across the hall, and I went to the door to hear what he would say. I could see him as he stood by the side of the sofa where they had laid master. He looked at him for a minute, then he turned to Miss Mary, and all he said was, 'Poor little maid!' I knew what was



coming then. I knew it was all over with master, and I stole back softly to the mistress. She never took no notice, but lay very still with that lovely smile on her face. And so she laid till toward evening, seeming not to see any of us. Miss Mary and the doctor and Mr. Henry Churchill were all three beside her. They didn't need to stay with the master more than a few minutes after Dr. Brainerd came in. He'd gone where we couldn't reach him, nor do him no good. He was away up above us; and so we'd all gathered around the poor mistress that he'd left behind him.

“All at once her eyes flashed open very wide, and she says, ‘Mary, little Mary!’ Miss Mary leaned over her, and she says, ‘I’m going to father, my darling. I give your baby-brother to you: you must be a mother to him.’ She stretched out her hand toward the baby — that was poor little Master Ned — lying at her side. His uncle, Mr.





Harry, lifted him up, and laid him on her breast. She kissed his forehead and lips, and his tiny hands; and then she said, 'Take him, Mary. He is yours. Be a loving, patient mother to my orphan baby.'

"Miss Mary took him in her arms, and then the mother motioned her to kneel down beside the bed, and she put her hands on his head and hers, and prayed God to bless them both. It was the beautifullest prayer I ever heard, like a little child asking something of its father, so gentle and pleading-like. While she was saying 'Amen,' the sun, which had been clouded that afternoon, broke out all of a sudden, and the brightness fell right across her face. I don't know how the angels' faces look, sir, but I'm sure the mistress' must have shone like theirs, as she lifted it up from the pillow, saying softly, 'Yes, Edward: the Master has come. He has called us both home.' Oh, so glad and so content her look was! We laid her down



again upon the bed, and Mr. Henry led Miss Mary away, with the tiny baby held tight in her arms."

The old nurse paused again, but Laurence, not feeling sure that the story was ended, and unwilling to lose any part of it, did not speak. After waiting a moment, she rose. So interested had both hearer and speaker been in the recital that they had not noticed the entrance of Miss Churchill; and both started in surprise when her gentle voice addressed Laurence, —

"So Lailie has been telling you the old story which to us is ever new," she said, with an accent of sadness in her tone. "She forgets that all are not as much interested in it as we. You must excuse her."

"I have to thank, rather than excuse her," said Laurence, warmly. "I have been greatly interested. I am very much obliged to you," he added, turning to Lailie, as, with another of her sweeping curtseys, she was leaving the room. "You can tell a story well."



“You’re very good to say so, sir,” she answered with a pleased smile.

“Lailie is a sort of privileged character in the house,” said Miss Churchill, apologetically, as the door closed behind the old nurse. “Her love for my mother amounted almost to worship, and her tenderness to us in our childhood was most deep and true. She never wearies of that sad day which left my baby-brother to my sole love and care; but I am afraid she has tired you.”

“Indeed, she has not. Ned had to leave me for a few moments, and I was looking at your mother’s miniature when Lailie spoke to me. I asked her for the story. It is a very lovely face, Miss Churchill.”

“And it pictures a very lovely woman,” she answered, with a slight quiver in her voice. “Lailie may well enjoy speaking of her.”

“But come,” she said more lightly, throwing off in a moment the grieved look which



had fallen upon her face. "There is Ned's step in the hall; and, as lunch is ready, we may as well go out and meet him on our way to the dining-room."

### III.

#### EAGLE CRAG.

“WELL, Larry, I suppose we may as well be off,” said Ned, pushing back his chair from the lunch-table as he spoke. “Mary, will you come with us?”

“I should like it very much, but I shall not be able to gratify my inclinations,” said Mary. “That woman who was here this morning came to tell me that old John Burgess’ daughter is very ill, and John sent up to ask if I would come down to see her.”

“Oh! wait until to-morrow, and go over there with Mr. Leonard after school. We want you with us this afternoon.”

“And I would like only too well to be with you. It is a splendid day for a sail on the lake. But suppose that the woman should die to-night?”



“ Well,” said Ned, slowly, “ if you will go, you will. I learned that lesson long ago. But we will walk down with you, for I won’t let you go to that place alone when there are so many roughs about.”

She leaned over him, and with a low, musical laugh, took his face between her hands as she said, “ O you old grandfather! what do you suppose I do when you are at school? Do you think that our poor people are deserted all the week? But I shall not let your pleasure be spoiled with worrying over me. I will stop at the Parsonage, and coax Mrs. Leonard to go to the beach with me. I will tell her that my ancient ancestor is afraid to have his elderly grand-daughter walk out alone: shall I? ”

“ You may tell her what you like if you only persuade her to go with you,” he said. “ It may do very well for you to visit among your Sunday-school people, and the old fishermen who belong here; but just now,



while the fish are so abundant, the village is overrun with strangers, and I don't like to have you walk there alone."

He spoke so seriously that Mary checked the laughing answer that rose to her lips.

"Very well," she said; "then I will not visit alone. You may set your heart at rest."

"And we cannot persuade you to go out on the lake with us?" asked Laurence, wistfully.

"No, I think not. But if you care to have me do so, I will ride with you to the Hall after dinner. It will be bright moonlight to-night, and one of the men can ride over with us, and bring me back."

"That is better than nothing," said Ned. "But our time is slipping away, Larry; so we had better start. If she will not go with us we must e'en go alone, — unless," he added, with a mischievous glance across the table, "unless Aunt Milly will accompany us."



“O Edward, my dear!” exclaimed Miss Millicent, lifting her hands in dismay, “you surely do not mean it. I am so nervous on the water at the best, and with two young — I’m sure I mean no want of respect to you, Mr. Bronson,” and she bowed with old-fashioned courtesy to Laurence; “but really, really you are both very young — and — and” —

“But, Aunt Milly, don’t you think that you ought to be with us to take care of us, we are both so very young, and so reckless?” urged Ned, with such apparent earnestness that Miss Millicent looked up at Mary in a sort of bewildered despair.

“Do you think I ought to go, my dear?” she asked entreatingly. “It would be terrible if any thing should happen to them. Perhaps Thomas had better accompany them. He might be of service in case of accident.”

“Oh! he wouldn’t know what to do, Auntie,” interrupted Ned. “And, besides, we wouldn’t





be so likely to listen to his advice as to yours. Come, I think we'll have to take you with us." and he laid his hand on her chair as if to draw her away from the table; but Miss Millicent's piteous look brought Mary to the rescue.

"That's all Ned's nonsense, Auntie," she said consolingly. "They are quite able to take care of themselves. Now away with you," she went on, turning to her brother. "You shall not plague Aunt Milly any more."

"You don't mind it: do you, Aunt Milly?" said the boy, stopping on his way from the room to kiss the troubled old face which was looking after him.

"No, my dear, no; only it makes me a little nervous perhaps. But are you quite sure it is not best for me to go? If any thing should happen, I could never forgive myself."

"No: that was only fun, Aunt Milly. Don't



worry. We'll be careful of ourselves. Come, Larry;" and away the boys went, Mary following them to the front door.

"Edward, Edward, my dear!" called a soft voice, as they sprang down the steps of the piazza.

"What now?" said Ned, a little impatiently, turning toward the house again.

"It is Aunt Milly," said Mary, laughing. "You will have to go back. I am not a bit sorry for you either, you saucy boy."

"Edward, my dear," said Miss Millicent, gently, looking out from the dining-room window with a very anxious face, "if you can wait one moment, I will bring you from my room some directions which I cut out from a paper the other day for the resuscitation of drowning persons. Perhaps you had better take them in case of accident."

Ned's merry laugh broke out joyously; and Laurence and Mary could not help joining it.



“Thank you, Auntie,” he said, looking up at her with a look which was a most perfect contrast to her anxious expression. “But I think we will enjoy our sail quite as well without your paper. It would be more suggestive than cheering. Good-by: now we are off;” and seizing Laurence’s arm, he rushed down the carriage-road at a pace which promised a speedy escape from any farther detentions on Aunt Milly’s part. Mary stood looking after him with a troubled look in her eyes, until, reaching the turn in the road which must hide him from her sight, he turned to wave his hat to her, and shout a last “good-by;” then she went into the house to meet Aunt Milly’s many questions and anxieties with regard to the boys.

“He is so very, very thoughtless,” she said to herself, as, having calmed as much as possible Aunt Milly’s distracted nerves, she went upstairs to prepare for her walk. “I wonder if I spoil him.” But after a while the shadow



faded from her face; and by the time she reached the Parsonage, on her way to the village, she wore her old look of happy content. After all, thoughtless as he was, she could not feel that she had spoiled him.

It was a most perfect afternoon for a boating excursion, the wind just cool enough to make the exertion of rowing pleasant, without being in the least chilly; and Laurence enjoyed it to the utmost. The low, wooded shore, bright now with starry anemones and sweet spring violets, brought back to his mind thoughts of the dear old homestead where much of his childhood had been passed; and he almost fancied himself floating down the stream which flowed at the foot of the garden in Glencoe. A sort of quiet had fallen on him, and his oar rested in the rowlock as his thoughts ran back to the old home, until Ned broke into his reverie by saying, —

“Look there, Larry. Do you recognize that old giant?”







Looking up quickly, he saw that the scene had changed completely. The shore had grown rocky in some places, running up almost precipitously from the border of the lake, while directly before them, apparently barring their farther progress, rose a huge rock, which seemed to have been thrown entirely across the lake, shutting it in completely from the world beyond.

"Do you know what that is?" asked Ned as Laurence rested his oar, and gazed silently up at the gigantic peak.

"No; but isn't he a magnificent fellow? He looks so proud and grand, and yet see the flowers lying all up his sides. They look as if they had thrown themselves there, trusting to his strength and protection."

"Very poetic, I don't deny," said Ned, with a mischievous glance at his friend. "But if they had happened to throw themselves upon the other side of their grand protector, they would have found that he was



a little rough, even in his tenderest moods. Give another look at him, Larry. He is an old friend."

"Then I am sorry to confess that I have forgotten him," replied Larry, after striving in vain for some moments to recognize one single feature in the picture before him.

"It is Eagle Crag."

"Nonsense!" said Laurence, looking a trifle vexed. "You sold me there," he added more good-humoredly. "I thought it was really some point which I ought to have recollected."

"I did nothing of the kind," said Ned, positively. "That is certainly Eagle Crag."

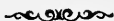
"Do you mean to say that it is the Seaward Cliff, as Charles Grant calls it?" asked Laurence, incredulously.

"Yes: listen a moment, and we may hear the breakers thundering against the other side."





It was no great marvel that Laurence found it hard to believe that Ned was in earnest. Eagle Crag was no new spot to him. Often and often, when bent on some adventurous frolic, had he climbed its rocky sides, pausing now and then to look down into the dark blue waves which dashed so madly against its base ; for the boys of Drayton Hall were very fond of showing their skill in climbing the steep and dangerous footpaths which ran from the foot of the huge precipice to its summit. But from the seaward side, the Crag was a bold rock, rising perpendicularly from the water, lashed furiously by the wild waves to which it opposed itself, and exposed to the fiercest blasts. Even in the softest days of summer, it was a wild, weird spot ; and it was difficult indeed to imagine that this lovely garden-like slope could be a part of that grim old giant whose face was so stern and hard. Yet, listening, his ear could catch the roll of the



breakers; and Ned laughed merrily as the astonished face was turned towards him as if asking for an explanation.

“The lake takes a complete sweep,” he said in answer to Laurence’s look of inquiry. “We are directly opposite Drayton; and if we had a good glass here, we could see all that is going on in the play-ground. You know that the Cliff is about a mile south of the Hall, and this is its farther side. All the rough winds are cut off, you see, from this spot; and the gruff old monster changes into a blooming maiden, as the sentimentals would say. The wall of rock which forms the old fellow’s head-piece cuts off completely all communication between the two sides, so that we have many an opportunity to astonish those of our visitors who have first seen him from the sea. But now I suppose that we must turn toward home, or Aunt Milly will be agonized by our tardiness. I wish that the Doctor was not so set upon having us at



the Hall on Sundays. Wouldn't it be jolly to stay with Mary until Monday?"

"Yes: that is always my cry when Saturday evening comes. But I suppose we must comfort ourselves with thinking of the many fellows who live too far away to spend even Saturday at home."

So the boat was headed round, and the two rowers bent themselves to their oars with an energy which brought them to the Manor House in time to prevent any extra anxiety on Miss Millicent's part.

A very merry party it was that drew rein at the gates of Drayton Hall about eight o'clock that Saturday evening. It was a magnificent night. The moon riding in triumph through a perfectly cloudless sky lit up the scene with almost the brightness of day, and the air was so fresh and cool that the riders were not overheated, although the swift pace at which they had galloped across the country might have served to call all



their young blood into action; for the very horses seemed to have caught the infection of their gay spirits and of the blithe beauty of the night, and had needed neither whip nor spur to urge them on their way.

"I wish those gray old walls were ten miles farther on," said Ned, as the eager horses champed their bits, and tossed their heads, impatient to be off once more. "I don't want to go in any more than the horses do."

"Well, what must be, must, I suppose," said Laurence; "and it is after eight now. The Doctor will look black if we are late. We must say good-night, Miss Churchill."

"Thomas can come over for the horses on Monday, Mary," said Edward. "Thomas, take good care of Miss Mary: don't let any harm come to her on your way home."

"Ay, ay, sir. I'll do the best I can for her," said the old man, shaking his head, which had grown gray in the Churchill ser-



vice, with an air which said that he considered the caution quite superfluous.

With another good-night, and a promise of meeting at church on the morrow, Mary rode away with her faithful escort, and the boys galloped off to the Hall stables.

“Oh! if you fellows haven’t missed the biggest row we’ve had this term!” exclaimed Will Seaton, as the two boys entered the study-hall, which on Saturday evenings was the scene of all the fun and jollity which a set of happy school-boys could possibly originate. “You’ve lost the best joke going.”

“What’s to pay?” asked Ned.

“Why, in the first place we’ve been scared nearly out of our wits. As for Haywood, he’s trembling yet with fright. Look at him: he’s shaking all over.”

The boys glanced toward Allan, who was sitting near, leaning back in his chair, shaking indeed, but with repressed laughter, which



broke out in a hearty peal as they turned their amused faces towards him.

“Let’s have the joke, Will,” said Laurence. “It must be too good to lose if it rouses our steady old Al to such a pitch.”

“It is good, and no mistake,” said Will. “I suppose you know, in the first place, that our learned friend, Roland Bentley, B.A., has a mortal terror of cats.”

“Yes: I know that.”

“Well, we boys were all here about an hour ago, enjoying ourselves one way and another, when all of a sudden there rang through the hall the most awful shriek you ever heard in your life. I was up on the table giving the fellows Achilles and Hector before Troy, and I must have been doing it pretty fairly too, for they were laughing fit to kill themselves; but I tell you that scream brought me up short, and the rest of them grew still in a jiffy. Before we had time to think what it was, it came again; and then



we flew, the whole crowd of us, out into the hall, and across to the north recitation-room. Just as we tore out, the Doctor came rushing down the stairs like mad. He reached the door first, but we were right after him, and in we all pelted together, master and man, mistress and servants, teachers and taught, in one big crowd; for the whole house was roused by that time. Oh, my!" and Will threw himself back in an uncontrollable fit of laughter, in which he was joined by every boy in the room, Ned and Laurence heartily contributing their quota, for the merriment was infectious.

"Hurry up, Will. Let's know what it was," said Ned, as soon as the noise subsided a little.

"It was Bentley, the professor," gasped Will, "mounted on the mantel-piece; and on the rug stood a cat—oh, my!—a monstrous yellow cat, with her back up half a mile high, her tail bristling, and her eyes like



two balls of fire, spitting and snarling at him like a dragon. As we rushed in, she made one spring for him,—I do believe the creature thought it was her last chance,—but she only caught the leg of his pants, and fell back without doing him any worse damage than tearing a hole in his trousers with her teeth. And if he didn't give a yell! Oh, it was too good!" And another roar of laughter made the walls ring again.

"Was it a cat belonging to the house?" asked Laurence.

"Yes: it seems that she has bothered him quite considerably lately. He has caught her in his room once or twice; and a day or two ago, finding her there, he soused her with cold water. She turned on him then, but Arthur was at hand, and he drove her off. To-night, the first thing he knew of her being near was hearing her give a snarl, and feeling her ugly claws on his neck, for she sprang square on his back. Poor fellow! I'm sorry





for him; but it's the tallest joke we've had this season. By the way, it got Al into an awful mess though: he's got a hundred lines."

"What for?" asked Edward, turning towards Allan.

"Why, for laughing at the misfortunes of his betters. You never heard a chap roar so in your life: it seemed as if he'd go into fits; and, as bad luck would have it, he stood close to the Doctor. He was as pale as any girl at first, —as white as poor Bentley himself,—and then he began to laugh, and he hasn't stopped yet, you see. Dr. Drayton spoke to him, but he couldn't seem to help it; and, after a minute, the Doctor ordered us all out of the room. Whereupon Mr. Bentley remarked that Mr. Haywood was only too glad of an opportunity to annoy him; and Al, not recovering himself even then, the Doctor ordered him a hundred lines as a sedative. It doesn't seem to work, though, as far as I



can see;" and Will glanced mischievously at Allan.

"Do be quiet, old fellow," said Allan. "I believe I am almost broken in two;" and he leaned wearily back in his chair. "I am going off by myself," he added, after a moment, "to do my lines. I shall have half an hour before bed-time."

He gathered up the books and papers which were strewn around him, and was leaving the room, when Ned locked his arm in his, saying, "I will sit with you;" and they went out together.

"I am sorry," said Allan, as he laid his books upon a desk in one of the smaller recitation-rooms, "that I happened to be the one whose amusement was particularly noticed. Not that I mind the lines so much, but the Bentleys and I were on bad enough terms before this; and it will only make matters worse between us. I don't know how it was, but I seemed to lose all control of myself.



I would have given any thing to stop merely for my own sake, but I could not. It was a most ridiculous scene."

Ned looked anxiously at him; for his voice was weak, and his utterance somewhat unsteady. His face was very pale; but as he caught Ned's eye, it crimsoned, and he broke out again with another burst of laughter.

"Allan, you're behaving like a donkey," said Ned.

He spoke suddenly and sharply. Allan glanced at him, then quieting himself with a strong effort, turned silently to his translation. Ned sat by reading, apparently absorbed in his book; but from time to time he caught the sound of a smothered laugh from Allan as he bent over his lesson. He took no notice, however; and by and by the bell rang for prayers, after which service the boys all dispersed to their dormitories.

## IV.

### AS MEEK AS MOSES.

“**A**LLAN!” exclaimed Ned Churchill, bursting suddenly into the room where Allan sat working diligently at his translation before school-hours on Monday morning, “is all this that I hear about you and Bentley true?”

Allan looked quietly up into Ned’s flushed and angry face. “What have you heard?” he asked.

“That Bentley insulted you; told you that you were no gentleman, called you a fool, and I don’t know what all besides; and that you stood there, and bore all his insolence without a word, until he exhausted his vocabulary of epithets, and then told him that you



were sorry that you had done any thing to annoy his brother. Is it possible, Allan Haywood, that you are such a mean fellow as that?"

"I am not quite ready, Ned, — I don't suppose you expect me to be, — to acknowledge myself a mean fellow," said Allan, his cheeks reddening in their turn as he spoke. "I am quite ready, however, to acknowledge the fact of having apologized to Bentley for my rudeness to the professor; but I did so *before* his abuse, not *after* it. You know perfectly well that I owed them an apology, and if I had not supposed that he would dislike having the matter alluded to, I should have spoken to the professor himself. I tried to see Bentley on Sunday; but it seems he was away somewhere with his brother, and I did not fall in with him until this morning."

"I don't see why you need have said any thing about it," said Ned, as hotly as before. "Those fellows both hate you, and you know



it. You might have been sure that you would receive nothing but impertinence for your pains."

"Perhaps I was sure of it," said Allan; "but that made no difference in my duty; even my best friend had told me that I was behaving like a donkey;" and he laid his hand on Ned's shoulder, and looked at him with a half smile as he spoke.

But Ned did not return the smile. He had just come up from the play-ground where a whole troop of boys were discussing the scene which had taken place between Allan and Bentley; and though every one among them was indignant at Arthur's insolent reception of Allan's apology, they were all quite as much, if not more, vexed with Allan for his passive endurance. Ned, who had not been present, had heard the story from half a dozen excited witnesses; and he was burning with shame and anger to find that they were all inclined to think, if not to say, that the



fear of Bentley's strong arm had much to do with Haywood's forbearance.

"I know I said that," he answered, with a strong touch of irritation in his tone; "but I thought that you had lost all control of yourself, and" —

"So I had," interrupted Allan, "and I am much obliged to you for putting a stop to my nonsense. I have not been feeling well for some days; and Saturday, if the truth must be known, I was more than half sick; and I suppose that the fright, and then the utter absurdity of that performance, must have upset me completely. I tell *you* this, Ned; but I would not have the other boys know it for a kingdom. You will understand me, but the Bentleys do not; and they have some reason for their ill-feeling."

"Nonsense, Allan! one would think it was a personal matter. Do you suppose that you were the only fellow in the school who laughed at the professor's plight?"



“No; but I happened to be singled out as the worst of them all; and I do not doubt that they take it as a personal affront. Arthur’s conduct shows that plainly enough.”

“Well, granted that it is so, and granted, too, that you owed him an apology: that was no reason why you should have borne Arthur’s insults so tamely. Do you know what the fellows are saying, Al?”

“No.”

Perhaps he suspected part of the truth, for his face lost some of the color which had glowed in it before, and he set his lips firmly as if he knew that there was something coming which would be hard to bear.

“They say,” said Ned, “that Bentley’s strength has had its weight with you.”

Allan stood for a moment looking at his friend with flashing eyes, and lips that worked strongly and passionately. But after a little his face regained its composure, and his voice was steady and controlled as he said,—





"Do *you* think it influenced me, Ned?"

"No: of course I don't. I know it's only that ridiculous notion of right and wrong which you will persist in bringing into every thing. But a fellow ought to stand up for his rights, Allan. Bentley ought to have been knocked down on the spot; and you could have done it too, for if you're not very strong, you're quick and dexterous, and you might have pitched him over in no time: you would, at least, have shown that you wasn't afraid of him. As things are now, the fellows all lean to his side, — not because they think he's right, but because you've shown so little pluck. There's one chance for you though. Bentley told Will Seaton that he was determined to make you fight; and as it seemed that he hadn't said enough yet, he'd try it again.. Now, Al, if he does, pitch into him. If you don't, you'll lose caste in the school."

"Then I must lose caste," said Allan, with



a quiet determination which drove Ned almost frantic.

"Do you mean to say that if Bentley attacks you again, you will not fight?"

"I will not fight."

"Then the boys are right: you must be a coward."

He did not look it, as, drawing up his tall figure to its full height, Allan moved slightly to one side, and laid his hand upon the door towards which Ned, in his anger, had turned.

"Edward Churchill," he said firmly, "you have gone farther than I should have dared to go with you, far as I would trust your love. I will not fight, save in self-defence; but neither will I allow any one, not even you, to call me a coward. It is a shameful name, and one which you know that I have never deserved."

He did know, right well, that the taunt was undeserved. The calm, resolute voice had, in some measure, cooled his anger; and



looking into the manly face which confronted him so steadily, he could not but take back the cruel word.

"I was wrong. I am very sorry," he said hastily, holding out his hand, which Allan grasped warmly. "But, Al, there must be something done. I cannot and will not bear to have you compared with that miserable Bentley to your disadvantage. The boys are declaring that you'll have to fight him, and there will be no end to their sneers if you refuse him again. Why, already Will has started them all off on couplets such as,

'Our old Al is meek as Moses,  
Soft as mush, and sweet as roses!'"

"Will's poetic fancies won't hurt me," said Allan, smiling. "He has challenged me before, and had to own himself beaten in the encounter."

"Then you are determined not to stand up for your rights."

"When my rights are touched, Ned, you



shall see whether I submit tamely; but as yet they have not been injured. Only *I* can touch my right to the name of a gentleman. The fact that Bentley has denied it to me does not take it from me; and it lies with me also to prove whether I am a fool or not. But I tell you all, that when I let a bully drive me into a fight, against my better judgment, by the mere force of persistent abuse and impertinence, you may call me a fool, and I shall not dare to resent it. As for Will, his bark is a good deal worse than his bite. I don't think I shall prove to be either 'soft as mush,' or 'sweet as roses;' and I think if we all understood the real meaning of that word 'meek,' we should not consider it very much of a slight to be compared to Moses."

"What do you call the real meaning of the word? I should think it was very easy to be understood."

"And you consider a meek man or boy a fellow who will let the world ride over him



rough-shod, and then get up and make an humble bow to the riders. Isn't that so, Ned?"

"Yes, very much so," said Ned.

"Yet it is said, 'The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth;' and surely a braver, nobler fellow never lived. It didn't look much like letting the world ride over him rough-shod, when he stood before the king, threatening him with the wrath of God; and sternly ordering him to let the children of Israel go that they might serve the Lord; nor when he stood on the borders of the sea with his rod stretched out to call the floods back upon the Egyptians; and neither Amalek, nor the Canaanites, nor Korah found him very easy to manage. Yet he did not think it worth his while to answer the Hebrew who taunted him with having taken vengeance on the cruel task-master, nor to denounce Aaron and Miriam for their



sedition. And there was another, Ned, 'who when He was reviled, reviled not again,' whose brave, grand heart was gentle and tender, and whose lips — the very lips which boldly asserted His right to rule as a king — breathed a special blessing on the meek."

"Well, well," said Ned, slowly, "I'm beaten if we are to have a long talk about it, for you always get the best of me in a discussion. Hark! there's the bell. We must be off. Hallo! there go your papers."

As he spoke, he stooped to pick up the papers which had slipped from Allan's book; but before he could touch them, his companion sprang forward, and snatched them up, glancing as he did so into Ned's face with an anxious, questioning look.

"What's the matter?" asked Churchill in surprise.

"I — I — nothing," stammered Allan.



"Come, we will be late," and he drew him from the room; but as they left it, Churchill noticed that he turned, and looked carefully around as if to make sure that nothing remained behind.

"What's wrong, Allan?" he said. "You have your translation, haven't you?"

"My translation? Yes, I believe so," he answered hesitatingly.

"Aren't you sure? Open the book and look;" and he laid his hand on the Euripides which Allan held in his arm, but his friend almost snatched it from his grasp.

"No matter — no matter — it is there — yes, I am sure it is there;" and turning hastily away, he entered the school-room a little in advance of him.

"What is to pay with that boy?" thought Ned; but the next moment the bell was tapped, and his lessons soon drove the little incident from his mind.

The moment Allan joined his companions,



he began to see that Ned's warning had not been superfluous. As he passed Will Scaton's desk, a whispered "Meek as Moses" met his ear; and before he reached his own seat, the whisper had deepened into a murmur, which was suddenly stilled by a loud rap upon the Master's desk. The words had, of course, not been taken up by the older and less mischievous boys of his own class; but even there he failed to meet his usual welcome. Not a syllable was spoken on the subject, but there was a nameless something in their looks and manner that he felt, although he could hardly have told in what way the unusual want of friendliness was manifested. Sensitive as a girl, this coldness cut sharply into a heart which had already that morning been deeply wounded by the one it most loved and trusted; but no one who looked on his calm, composed face would have suspected the pain which lay hidden behind that veil. The slow morning lagged





wearily away, until at length the hour for which he had been longing struck. Twelve o'clock ! For one half hour, at least, he could escape the hundreds of quizzical eyes, the mocking lips, the sneers, half laughing, half earnest, which met him at every turn. Taking up his Euripides once more (for his translation was not quite completed), he passed through the crowd which was rushing from the Hall for the half-hour's recess, and made his way to a little arbor at the foot of the lawn, where he hoped to finish his work in peace. As he entered, he saw that it was already occupied, and drawing quickly back, without waiting to see who had been beforehand with him, he was turning away when Laurence Bronson's voice checked him.

"Come in, Al, — come in. I am only reading."

They were the first pleasant words which had been spoken to him since his encounter with Bentley.



“Thank you,” he said cordially. “I am glad to have a welcome at last. The whole school has sent me to Coventry this morning.”

“I see they have, and it is a shame,” said Laurence, warmly. “By the way, Al, what has set the Bentleys against you so strongly?”

“I can’t answer the question with regard to Arthur,” said Allan, throwing himself down on the bench beside Bronson. “He always did seem to dislike me from the first. But the professor and I agreed well enough until last year, when I took the prize for composition. Arthur had been working for it as hard as I, and they were both very angry that he missed it. Since then the professor has been less than civil to me, and Arthur is still worse.”

“Let him do and say what he likes,” said Laurence, indifferently. “This little breeze will blow over directly, and you will be all



right ; but I'm sorry you didn't thrash him in the beginning."

"I am not," said Allan ; "and they shall not force me to it, if they keep me in Coventry for the rest of the year."

"What's that?" said Laurence, as the school-bell rang out loud and clear. "Our time isn't half up. We've had only ten minutes," he added, glancing at his watch. "What's up, I wonder?"

"There must be something wrong," said Allan, as they left the arbor together.

A crowd of boys, all eagerly asking why their recess had been cut so short, came swarming up the various roads to the house ; some laughing, some scolding, all curious to learn the cause of this unusual occurrence ; for those who had been Drayton boys for years never remembered having had the time-honored mid-day playtime broken into in this summary fashion.

As Laurence and Allan joined the noisy



throng, Arthur Bentley and Will Seaton came up from a side-road, and threw themselves into the stream a little behind them. The next moment, Will's quick eye had noted Allan, and he pointed him out to Arthur.

"There's Al," he said. "Let's have some fun out of him before we get to the Hall."

The hint was taken at once. It was the very chance that Arthur had been seeking, an opportunity to insult him again before the school, and to accomplish another purpose which he never would have dared to confess to Will.

Stepping up to his side, he said insolently, "Well, Miss Haywood, so you are under Mr. Bronson's protection, eh? What book have you got there?"

Laurence turned sharply round; but Haywood, saying quietly, "Don't notice him, Laurence," drew him on toward the Hall.

"Stop! I want to see that book," said Arthur, in the same imperious tone; and



placing himself directly in Allan's path, he laid his hand upon the book, and drew it from his arm. For one instant Allan stood and looked at him, as, with apparent carelessness, he flitted the leaves of the Euripides; but the next moment he had stepped forward, seized him by the collar and waistband, and, by a dexterous movement, lifted him out of his path, and set him down upon the road behind him. A wild shout of delight, mixed with vociferous cries of "Hurra for old Al!" "I knew he'd come out all right!" "How are you now, Bentley?" &c., followed Allan's unlooked-for exploit; while Laurence, laughing heartily at Arthur's overthrow, bent to pick up the fallen book, and the scattered papers which had dropped from it.

"You seem to have plenty of manuscript here," he said as he handed it to Allan. "Does all this scribbling belong to you?" and he stretched out his hand filled with papers written in pencil.



Allan grasped them hurriedly. "Yes, yes! they are mine. Are you sure you picked them all up?" and he looked about upon the road where the book had dropped as it fell from Arthur's hand, with a nervous, uneasy glance.

"Yes: I gathered them together, every one of them. What's the matter now?" for Allan had seized his arm with a grip which fairly pained him. "Are you sick?" he asked anxiously, seeing that the boy was deadly pale.

A spasm passed over Allan's face: he bent himself almost double, as if convulsed with agony; but the next moment he raised his face, now flushed and burning, and loosed his hold on Laurence's arm.

"A sudden pain, that was all," he said feebly. "Don't speak of it before those fellows. Bentley was rather too heavy for me. Come, we must go on;" and they joined their comrades.



The crowd was still pouring into the Hall, their interest in the question of their recal divided now with their delight in Bentley's discomfiture and Allan's self-assertion.

## V

### THE PARODY.

**B**UT all discussion and debate were hushed, as the boys re-entered the long school-room, and found that Dr. Drayton himself stood in the Master's desk, — a circumstance, in itself, as unusual as the short recess. As one after another caught sight of the tall, gaunt form standing erect, with heavy brows bent almost threateningly on the various groups pressing in through the open door, the news spread that the Doctor was there, and the boys came in more quietly ; for the Doctor, if he were not much loved, was at least held in great reverence by his scholars. His face was one to win more of respect than of affection. The lines about





the large mouth were hard and stern; the dark gray eyes were keen and piercing; and the high, intellectual forehead could frown terribly, if need were. And need there seemed to be this morning, for it was drawn in lines of severity such as the boys had not seen in many a long day.

“Young gentlemen!” — How loud and clear his voice rang out! Evidently he intended to nail the attention of every one in the room, in any part of which one might have heard a pin drop, so perfect was the stillness. — “Young gentlemen, I have called you in at this early hour, because I wish to ascertain without a moment’s unnecessary delay who was the originator of a most mean and dastardly trick which has been perpetrated upon Professor Bentley. One of the actors in the farce is known; the others, if others there be, are yet unknown: but as soon as they are discovered, they shall be expelled from my school. Many of you, doubtless, are



ignorant of the circumstances to which I allude. They are these. Some persons, and among them some of the best and bravest men that ever lived, are tormented with an aversion — a terror, I may call it — of some particular object; and you all know, from experience, that Professor Bentley suffers from such a dread. An insulting parody which I hold in my hand has been written by one of your comrades, and was to-day posted up on the Professor's door, to the handle of which a cat was tied by a string. Fortunately, the plot was discovered before Mr. Bentley had occasion to go to his room. If the perpetrators of this outrage choose to confess their guilt, they will save me much trouble; for I am determined that they shall not escape, and I will ferret out the whole matter, if I spend months in the work."

The Doctor's speech was followed by the most perfect silence. The boys looked from one to the other in amazed inquiry, but not



a whisper or a movement was heard. Dr. Drayton stood frowning down upon them, watching intently for some sign of guilt; but he saw nothing to lead him to suspect any one. After a few moments' angry survey of the hundreds of young faces before him, he spoke again.

"The author of these lines will be kind enough to come forward, and relieve me of them."

There was another silence, deeper than the first. The Doctor's face was turned towards the long row of desks, behind which sat the senior class of the school; but every boy there returned his scrutinizing look honestly and fairly.

"Allan Haywood, stand forward!"

Allan started, as well he might; for the Doctor's voice was awful in its wrath. He rose instantly, however; and, passing round the end of the seat, came out and stood in the centre of the floor, with every eye fixed on him.



“Why did you not claim your property, sir?” asked Dr. Drayton, sternly.

“Because I see none to claim, sir,” replied Allan steadily. “If you allude to that paper in your hand, I have never seen it until now.”

“Do you deny your own handwriting?” asked the Doctor. “Have a care, Haywood. I thought you far above any such heartless trickery as this. Do not make me think you false, as well as cruelly revengeful.”

“You shall have no cause to think me either false or” — but there he paused.

Dr. Drayton had taken a step forward, and laid before him the paper. If he knew his own penmanship, which was somewhat peculiar in its characteristics, the lines were his. He stood looking at them for a moment, the same unbroken stillness reigning around him; then he raised his head, and said, —

“I do not understand this. I own that this handwriting is wonderfully like my own,



but my own it is not. Mr. Bentley and I have not been on the best of terms; but I am sorry that Dr. Drayton does not know me better than to think me capable of such a malicious trick as has been played upon him. I deny it, wholly and entirely;" and he looked frankly up into the face of his master.

Dr. Drayton eyed him searchingly, doubtful whether to trust the evidence of his own senses, or the honest, manly face which confronted him. Apparently he chose the latter; for bidding Allan return to his seat, he stepped back into the desk, and again addressed the school.

"You have all heard," he said more calmly than he had before spoken, "Allan Haywood's strong denial of the charge brought against him. Circumstances seem to point him out so undeniably as the author of these lines that I could not question his guilt; but he repels the accusation so stoutly, that I must, at least, give him the benefit of the doubt. I



am however, as I said before, determined to sift this matter to the bottom. Except the evidence of this handwriting, I have no clew whatever to the perpetrators; and I see no course open to me, except one which I know must be extremely distasteful to you all. Nevertheless, I shall pursue it. Every desk and room in this establishment shall be searched, in the hope that we may obtain some clew to the author of this parody."

A murmur of disapprobation ran through the room. Such a thing had never been done before at Drayton Hall; and more than one eye flashed, as the boys looked first at one another, and then at the masters who sat in a row on either side of the Doctor's desk. The murmur grew louder and stronger, but Dr. Drayton soon stilled it.

"Silence!"

The stentorian voice drowned for the moment every other sound; and when its echoes died away, the room was quiet as the grave,



although the extreme unpopularity of the measure was plainly discernible in many a dark and angry face.

“The search will be begun here, and at once. Mr. Acton will take the senior class, Mr. Moore the second, and so on. Gentlemen, the sooner this disagreeable business is over, the better.”

The under-masters rose to perform their unwelcome duty, with as much apparent unwillingness as the boys could have desired; and Mr. Acton approached the desks of the senior class.

Arthur Bentley, Laurence Bronson, Edward Churchill, and Allan Haywood sat side by side at the upper end of the long row, Arthur's desk being the one nearest the head-master's seat. Not a boy in the room stirred to open his desk, or to aid in any way the hateful search; but the masters passed on resolutely in their task. Mr. Acton had opened the three first desks, glanced over



their contents, and closed them again, and had laid his hand upon Allan's, when his eye fell on a book lying upon the lid, from the leaves of which appeared the edges of some papers which had evidently been thrust in hurriedly.

"What papers are these?" he asked, laying his hand upon the book.

Allan started, and reached quickly forward to grasp it; but the master drew it from him.

"What papers are these?" he asked again, very sternly, for the boy's manner had made him suspect that something was wrong.

"It is my translation — at least — at least — don't read them, Mr. Acton. They have nothing to do with the parody;" and Allan looked entreatingly into the master's grave face.

But Mr. Acton had opened the book, and taking from it a folded sheet of foolscap, glanced over it, his countenance darkening more and more; while Allan watched him





closely, his color coming and going painfully. In a moment, Mr. Acton had raised his head, and with a look of scorn, which Haywood totally misunderstood, turned from him towards Dr. Drayton. But Allan stopped him.

"Mr. Acton," he said earnestly, "don't take those lines to the Doctor: they concern no one but myself."

"Allow me to judge of that, sir," was the severely spoken response; and pushing aside his detaining hand, Mr. Acton walked up to the platform.

Every eye in the immense room was upon him, for this little interruption to the proceedings had attracted universal attention. Without a word, he laid the paper in Dr. Drayton's hand. The Doctor scanned it closely. His brow contracted angrily, and springing to his feet, his voice rang through the room again, more sharply than before.

"The search may cease: The culprit is found. Allan Haywood!"



The boy rose from his seat, wondering what those few lines which he had so assiduously hidden from every one should have to do with the matter in hand.

“Take your stand here, sir;” and the Doctor motioned him to the platform where the whole school would have a full view of him.

Allan took the position assigned him, and looking up, met the many pairs of eager eyes unflinchingly. Why should he not meet them? He had done nothing which should make him quail before them. And so he stood there,—again suspected, he knew not why, but quite determined to stand his ground,—boldly facing his wondering comrades.

“May I ask you, Mr. Haywood,” said Dr. Drayton, in a tone of utter contempt, “why you objected to Mr. Acton’s seeing this paper?”

A few moments before, Allan would have been all blushes and confusion at the mere



mention of that paper; but now he saw that his justification or condemnation was in some way connected with it, and he answered, with a somewhat heightened color, but quite steadily, —

“Because, sir, it concerns myself alone. It is an entirely private matter.”

“Suppose you let the school judge of that. Read it aloud.”

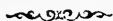
Now indeed he faltered. The Doctor placed it in his hand, but he did not open it: he only looked imploringly into the hard, cold face above him.

“I cannot read it aloud,” he said. “You do not know what you ask of me.”

“I do know what I ask. Will you obey me?”

“I cannot read those lines before the school.”

For a moment the Doctor looked at him as he stood there, very pale now, but firm as



a rock, evidently uncertain how to proceed. At length he said, —

“ Then I shall read it myself.”

“ I beg you not to,” urged Allan in a low voice; “ at least, not while I stand here.”

He paid no heed to the beseeching words, but spreading the sheet out upon the desk, said, —

“ Young gentlemen, you heard Mr. Haywood’s denial of the authorship of the parody which was written in mockery of Mr. Bentley. Here is a rough pencil draft which he does *not* deny. The school shall judge whether or not the honor of the conception belongs to him.”

Allan had turned a little from the front of the platform, and his head was bent slightly forward so as to hide his face. But as the Doctor began to read in his heavy, sonorous voice, he raised himself, and watched him with astonishment written over every line of his countenance. For the words he heard



were not the simple but earnest longings of his own heart, which he had treasured so secretly.

“To the Professor’s room a cat drew nigh,”—

read the Doctor.

Allan stood up bravely and strongly now, listening with an interest whose source was wholly changed.

“Her long black whiskers nodded from on high ;  
Her teeth shone white ; her sharp, unsparing claws  
Were but half hidden ’neath her furry paws ;  
And from her eyes fierce, fiery splendors shone,  
Like Jove’s own lightning, or the rising sun.  
As Bentley sees, unusual terrors rise :  
Struck by some god, he fears, recedes, and flies ;  
He leaves the door, he leaves the walls behind :  
And Pussy follows like the wingéd wind.  
Thus at the panting dove, the falcon flies.  
The poor Professor screamed and shut his eyes.  
On, on they passed, one chasing, one in flight ;  
(The mighty fled, pursued by feline might).  
Swift was the course ; no vulgar prize they play,  
No vulgar victim must reward the day,  
Such as in school-rooms crown the unequal strife ;  
The prize contended was our poor Prof.’s life.

At last, in terror wild, — as if he’d wings, —  
On the high mantel the Professor springs ;



And raging pussy, balked of her rich prey,  
Stands on the rug, and spitting waits her day.  
Meantime Prof., yelling with tremendous might,  
Calls all the school to see the jolly sight;  
And pussy, thinking this her latest chance,  
Before the fire begins a warlike dance.  
Upward she makes a spring ! oh, how he roars  
As through his pantaloons she puts her claws !  
O pussy, shame to beat so small a foe !  
How can you treat our poor Professor so ?  
Unequal warfare is not brave nor wise :  
Why don't you fight a cat of your own size ? ”

The Doctor ceased reading, and to his utter surprise, on turning his eyes on Allan, found him standing erect before him, returning his gaze fearlessly.

“ What have you to say for yourself, sir, in justification of such unbounded impertinence as this ; and of the unblushing falsehood with which you attempted to deceive me, and — I regret to say — *did* deceive me a few moments since ? ”

“ I have to say, sir, that I am guilty neither of the falsehood, nor of the impertinence,” replied Allan, firmly.



“And I have to say in my turn,” said the Doctor, goaded almost to fury by the boy’s calm manner, “that you are *proved* guilty of both. The first fault I determined to punish by expulsion from the school; but the second—the audacious, cool falsehoods which you persist in maintaining, in spite of the proofs given by your own acknowledged handwriting, by this copy of the Iliad just now taken from your desk by a person whom I told to search it, and by your guilty manner when this rough draft was discovered—is doubly worthy of the punishment. You are hereby expelled from Drayton Hall. You will return to your guardian this afternoon. In the mean time, you may leave this room at once, and await me in my study.”

The boy stood as if crushed, his head sunk upon his breast, his whole frame quivering under the load of shame which bore him down like a resistless weight. Was this all that his word was worth? The blow had



fallen suddenly upon him ; for he had not, for one moment, doubted his ability to clear himself from the shameful charge. But in an instant his false position thrust itself upon him in its clearest light. Every thing was against him, the handwriting, the rough draft, his own manner. What should he do ? Did every one doubt him ?

He glanced hastily around to see. How coldly and suspiciously all his old friends returned his anxious gaze ! Slowly his eye travelled around the room, meeting no friendly glance anywhere, until it reached Ned Churchill's face, and rested there. Ay, rested there ; for it was met by a smile as glad, as trustful, as entirely confiding, as ever it had met before. It seemed to change the whole course of his thoughts and feelings ; a new resolution seemed to inspire him, and straightening himself up, he turned boldly toward the Doctor once more.

“I requested you to leave the room at





once," said the Doctor, sternly. "Did you not hear me?"

"Yes, sir," replied Allan, respectfully, yet with a determination which quite equalled the master's; "but I must be heard. You have doubtless the power to expel whom you will from your school; but have you the right to expel me unheard, undefended, upon mere circumstantial evidence (which I must admit is strongly against me), when I give you my word, which you have never had reason to doubt, that I am guiltless in this thing?"

"If you can clear yourself," replied the Doctor, without the slightest relenting in his tone, "no one will be more ready to hear you than I; but it will be a strange thing if you can do so, after acknowledging this paper as your own."

"I spoke of that paper as my own, totally mistaking it, sir. I had not seen it, but supposed it to be mine, as it was taken from a



book in which I had placed some manuscript. As to the copy of the Iliad, and the papers which it contains, I have not seen them, either now or at any other time. I had heard nothing of the plot, either of its conception or its execution, until now."

"How do you account for this then?"

Dr. Drayton handed him the two pencil drafts, one of them corrected, revised, and changed, almost line by line; the other written out more clearly, but like the first, dissimilar in the wording in some respects from that taken from the Professor's door, which had evidently, however, been copied from the clearer draft. Allan studied them carefully. Like the first, they appeared to be in his own handwriting. He could not comprehend it.

"I cannot account for it, sir," he answered, meeting the Doctor's scrutinizing gaze.

"You own that it is written exactly in your hand?"



"No, sir. But I do own that the differences are so slight that not one person in five hundred would be likely to detect them."

"No one who has yet seen the papers has detected them," said the Doctor, pointedly. He could be fearfully caustic when he chose. "You have no proof of innocence to offer?"

"No, sir, none. I can only assert and re-assert my complete ignorance of the whole affair."

"Then I must request you to consider your relations with Drayton Hall discontinued until such time as you can refute the strong evidence against you. You will do well to retire to my study at once."

Allan felt that he would do well to go at once; for as he spoke his last words, he had had a warning that if he intended to leave the room without aid, he must do so quickly. He paused for one moment to bow coldly to Dr. Drayton, and again to the masters whom he must pass in leaving the room, and then



moved toward the door. Reaching it, he turned to take one last look at the old room which he should never enter again, and then with a wistful glance at Ned he went out.

But in that momentary look which Ned had caught, he had seen something that made him spring up suddenly, to the astonishment of all around him.

“The young gentlemen will please to keep their seats,” said Dr. Drayton, sharply.

“But Allan is sick,” said Ned, earnestly. “Let me go to him, please ;” and he left his desk, forgetting all discipline in his eagerness and anxiety.

“Mr. Churchill, return to your place,” said the Doctor, authoritatively. “Mr. Acton, will you see if Haywood needs attention? It did not strike me that he looked ill.”

Mr. Acton went out in obedience to a sign from the principal; and passing through the main hall, crossed a narrow entry, and entered the study, or “lecture-room,” as the boys



appropriately termed it. But Allan was not there. Leaving the room again, he noticed that the door leading to a small piazza, which ran along the side of the house, was open, and looking out he saw him leaning against a column as if he were not able to stand. Evidently the boy had heard his step; for gathering up all his energy, he stood erect, and turned his colorless face toward the teacher, as if to ask why he had intruded upon him.

“Are you sick, Haywood?” asked Mr. Acton. “Shall I bring any thing for you?”

“Nothing, thank you,” replied Allan, coldly. “I need nothing.”

“You are looking very ill.”

The words were kindly spoken, but Allan made no answer.

“Will you come into the study, and lie down?”

“I prefer to remain here. I need no help.”

Mr. Acton moved slowly towards the door;



but before he had actually entered the house Allan's better, gentler nature triumphed.

"Forgive my rudeness," he said, laying his hand upon Mr. Acton's arm. "I know you mean kindly, and there was much to make you doubt me. I felt as if I were choking, and came out for the air. I will stay here until the Doctor comes; and then — and then — I will go home."

His desire to be alone was so manifest that Mr. Acton left him; pausing first to shake hands with him, and say, "I do most earnestly hope that you may be able to prove your innocence, Haywood."

"Thank you," he said, and that was all.

## VI.

### TRUST AND SUSPICION.

THERE was not much work done in school that day, nor when studies were over did there seem to be much heart for play. The boys stood about the roads and lawn in groups, discussing the exciting occurrences of the morning, all expressing their opinions freely, both with regard to Allan and the Doctor. Allan's manliness and determination had won universal admiration, and were the theme of much praise; while the severity of Dr. Drayton was commented upon with equal freedom. Some thought it perfectly just: others thought no terms too hard for its condemnation; and so the war of words ran high in the little community.



"I tell you what it is, Will Seaton," said Charlie Grant, one of Allan's sturdiest supporters, "you'd better drop your rhymes about 'soft as mush,' and 'meek as Moses' now. There isn't a boy in the school who would have faced the Doctor as old Al did this morning. He's got lots of pluck, I tell you. You couldn't have done that yourself."

"I'll own up to that," said Will, candidly. "I wouldn't wonder if I'd have walked the first time the Doc ordered me out of the room in that awful voice; and I'm very sure I couldn't have stood the second dose. Al don't want spirit, after all, as he proved this morning before that row came on. Do you know, Ned," he asked, turning to Churchill, who stood near, leaning against a tree, and taking little part in the conversation, "that he caught Bentley up, and lifted him clean out of his path this morning, when Arthur put himself in his way?"





"No," said Ned, his face lighting up eagerly. "Did he do that?"

"Ask Bentley," laughed Will. "It was a good joke. I haven't seen a better in a long while. Bentley went up to him for the mere sake of chaffing him; and I put him up to it, I'm sorry to say. He began with his impudence, of which Al took no notice, until he fairly stopped him in the road, and took his Euripides right out of his hand. Al just looked at him as cool as you please. Then he caught him up by the trousers, and turned him out of the road as if he'd been a snake. I tell you I was mad enough at myself for all I'd said and done this morning."

Ned did not answer. He stood glowering wrathfully at Bentley, who had joined another group gathered under a huge oak-tree nearby. The conversation turned now to the case of the parody, and the evidence for and against Allan. Ned did not listen to it for long. Turning to Laurence Bronson, who



stood near, he said, "Let's go up to the Crag, Bronson: I'm tired of all this talk."

For a long while they walked on in silence, for their hearts were full. Allan was a great favorite with both, as indeed he was with the greater part of the school; for in spite of the sobriquet of 'old Al,' which his steadiness and sobriety had gained for him, and the fun and jokes which were often played off at his expense, there was scarcely a boy in the Hall who did not honor him for his adherence to the right, and love him for his unfailing kindness and helpfulness to all who were in need of aid.

They passed rapidly over the distance which lay between the Hall and the giant peak to which they had set out; and, climbing its rough side by a narrow and precipitous path, came out upon a ledge of rock overhanging the sea, and sat down there. A huge wall of rock rising behind them shut out all view of the land, and before them lay



a great waste of blue water, bounded only by the far-off horizon, whose waves dashed with a roar like thunder against the opposing crag.

“Laurence,” said Ned, without raising his eyes from the water upon which they had been fixed ever since he had taken his seat upon the ledge, “those fellows at the Hall are the shabbiest set of scamps I ever knew. There aren’t half a dozen boys there who believe in Allan. Half a dozen? I don’t believe there’s one, besides yourself and me, unless it’s little Charlie. You don’t mean to say,” he added, turning fiercely on Laurence, who had not answered, “that *you* don’t trust him?”

“No: I don’t mean to say any thing of the kind,” said Bronson, quietly; “but I must confess myself perfectly bewildered. Such a strange thing happened this morning, Ned. You remember Seaton’s telling you about Bentley’s snatching Allan’s book from him?”



“ Yes.”

“ Bentley dropped the book when Al seized him, and it fell in the road. There were a lot of papers in it, and I gathered them all up. As I handed them to Al, I said some trifling thing about them; and you never saw a fellow look so startled. He caught them away from me as quick as a flash, and hid them away in the book in no time, looking all round to make sure that none had been left behind. And, Ned, I’m almost certain that paper was among them. In fact, I am sure; for I saw ‘ Parody ’ written on the outside of it.”

Ned sat thinking. He, too, remembered just such an occurrence, and Allan’s evident anxiety lest he should see the papers which he had placed in the book. Indeed, Allan’s confusion when Mr. Acton opened the Euripides had brought it to his mind before, but his friend’s manner had so convinced him of his innocence, that he had put the recollection



from him, feeling certain that he would explain it all in time.

“I don’t know what it means,” he said at last, slowly and thoughtfully; “but I do know that no boy could possibly have borne himself as Allan did to-day unless he were perfectly innocent. ‘Meek’ those fellows call him! It would be a glorious thing for them all if they could get hold of a little of his style of meekness. What *are* we to do for him?”

Poor Ned! if he had been a girl he would have laid his head down upon Laurence’s shoulder and cried the tumult of his grief and indignation into something like calmness. But being a tall boy, fifteen years old, he would not, perhaps could not, give himself that blessed relief; so he sprang to his feet, and began to pace up and down the narrow ledge with swift, rapid strides.

“Laurence,” he said, stopping suddenly in his walk, “did you say that Bentley actually had that book in his hand?”



"Yes, I said so. He held it for a full minute I should think."

"And it was the same book from which the parody was taken?"

"Yes. But — Ned — Ned — you surely don't suspect Bentley of such a deed as that?" said Laurence, in a shocked voice, as his companion's meaning flashed on him.

"I did not say so," replied Ned.

"And then the handwriting," suggested Laurence; "how can we account for that?"

"I don't pretend to account for it," was the second unsatisfactory answer.

Two or three more of those rapid turns up and down the rock were taken, and then Ned said, "Laurence, I want to go back. Are you ready?"

"Yes; and we need to go at once. We will not have more than time to reach the Hall before study-hour. It is past tea-time now."

"Churchill," said Charlie Grant, running



up to meet them as they entered the gates, "here is a note which a man gave me for you just now. I think it was Mr. Leonard's man. Is it from dear old Al?" asked the child, lingering at Ned's side as he tore open the envelope.

"Yes," said Ned, slowly, as his eye ran over the few hastily written words.

"Does he say Mr. Leonard believes him?" persisted Charlie.

"Of course he does," replied Ned, sharply, but without looking up from the note.

"And so do I, with my whole heart," said the child, earnestly.

"You grand little fellow!" exclaimed Ned, his face breaking into the first smile it had worn that day. "Stick to him, Charlie boy. We'll clear him yet,—you and I;" and, snatching him up in his arms, he kissed him twice.

Charlie stood looking after him in perfect amazement; as, having placed him on his feet again, Ned turned away, and walked



rapidly up the road toward the Hall, without even waiting for Laurence.

Passing in through the main entrance, he crossed over to the long school-room, and walked straight to Allan Haywood's desk. The Euripides he had placed within it before leaving the room that afternoon; and now taking it out, he opened it, and took from it Allan's translation. That did not seem to content him, for he looked the book over carefully again and again. Then he examined the desk, but apparently with the same unsatisfactory result; for he was rising from it with a very disturbed expression of face, when something lying on the floor at his feet caught his eye. He stooped and picked it up. It was a sheet of foolscap paper, folded to about the size of that on which the parody was written. Simply glancing at it, he placed it in his pocket; then he smoothed out the crumpled note which he still held in his hand, and re-read it.





“DEAR NED, — I have only time to write a word or two; but if you can get hold of my Euripides, will you take from it some papers which are there? I am afraid that you will laugh over them as sentimental scribbling, but I must run the risk. Don't let any one else see them.

“The thought of your dear, faithful face, so full of trust when every other was dark with doubt, kept me up until I reached the Parsonage, where I am trusted as you trust me; and I want no more.

“Your ever grateful friend,

“ALLAN HAYWOOD.”

“Oh, Al! Al! and only this morning I called you ‘coward’! What a miserable fool I was not to know your brave heart better than that!”

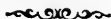
He laid his head down upon the book, and a great, heavy sob broke from him; but no tears came to soften the bitter, self-reproachful sorrow which oppressed his heart. By



and by he heard the voices of the boys as they went by the windows. It was study-hour, and in another moment they would be in the room. Hastily placing the Euripides in his own desk, he took out some of his books; and, by the time that the door was thrown noisily open, was apparently engrossed in his studies.

Meantime, Allan, having been closeted for an hour with Dr. Drayton, had set out for the Parsonage, bearing with him a letter which, the Doctor said, would be followed that evening by a visit from himself to his guardian.

A walk of five long miles lay before Allan, a task for which he felt scarcely equal; but nothing would have tempted him to breathe the truth to the Doctor. And when once he had started, the fresh, bright air seemed to invigorate him, and he arrived at his journey's end without a recurrence of the strange pain which had come upon him so often within



the last day or two. But he was very tired, — so tired that he felt he must look white and jaded ; and he paused at a few rods from the Parsonage gate to rest awhile, for he did not want to startle them with his pallid face.

It was a pleasant picture that met his eye as he stood there leaning against a fence on the opposite side of the road. The little brown Parsonage embowered in the horse-chestnut trees, with the sunlight flashing on all its window-panes, looked like a gold-stone set in green and white mosaic ; while the clear sky, overarching all, formed a second setting of blue enamel. And the prettiest bit of coloring in all the sweet picture was the gentle-looking woman sitting in that window, with the lace curtain falling around her like a veil, her head bent over her sewing, and the soft ripple of her voice, as she warbled out the music of an old hymn, coming to him as he watched her.

“ Dear Aunt Carrie ! ”



There was no tie of relationship between them save that which makes some women kin to all on whom their sweet influence falls ; but he had always called her by the name since that first night on which he had come, a perfect stranger, to her home ; brought by her husband to whose care he had been left by his dying father, an old friend of Mr Leonard's.

She had been a beauty once, report said ; and certainly, with those silvery bands of hair laid back from the smooth, fair brow, with those bright, dark eyes which seemed always looking yearningly out to see what sunlight they could shed on a world full of shadows, and those full red lips which were ever breaking into happy song, the mistress of Graydon Parsonage was something more than a beauty now.

The very room in which she sat was full of sweet memories to him. As he stood waiting there, he recalled it as he had seen



it on the night of his arrival; the bright wood fire blazing on the hearth, throwing a ruddy glow over the pictures on the walls, and flinging fantastic shadows on the dark wainscoting; the neat, orderly room where every thing looked easy and cosily comfortable, yet where every thing was in its proper place, for there were no darling, disarranging little hands in the old Parsonage. Nearly thirty years ago, a sunny little head had been laid to rest in Graydon churchyard; yet the mother talked of her "baby" still. What if the violets had blossomed over the tiny grave for nearly thirty spring-times; what if it were so many long, long years since she folded the little snowy dresses, and laid away the small socks which should never cover dancing feet again; was he not her "baby" still? There had been no sorrow nor pain for him in all those long years; the smooth fair brow had not been wrinkled with the cares of manhood; the soft, clear eyes had not grown



serious and grave with thought and anxiety : she had laid him in the Master's tender arms, "a little child," when He had called him, and

"They measure not by months and years,  
Where he had gone to dwell."

And then the boy thought of the greeting he had received. How the dimly-seen figure sitting in the window, with her work-table beside her, but with her hands folded idly in her lap, singing softly in the gloaming, had come quickly forward to meet him. How she had taken his face between her hands and kissed his forehead ; and then had drawn him to the fire, and held his cold fingers in her own warm grasp, and talked gently of his journey and other trivial matters, until he went up to his room ; and then how she had come to him when he had laid his tired, aching head upon the pillow, and, kneeling beside his bed, had laid her hand tenderly on his forehead, as she said, "So you have



come to Graydon to be my boy, Allan. Many, many years ago, my only little one went up to the far-off land to which your dear father and mother have just gone. They have gone to my child, and their child has come to me. I will love him very dearly for my baby's sake; and he will love me for his mother's sake." He had laid his head upon her breast without a word; but from that night she had stood next to his mother in his heart's love.

For full fifteen minutes, he had been leaning against the fence, thinking over all this, when suddenly she turned her head, and saw him. In an instant, her work was thrown aside, and although he went quickly to meet her, she ran so swiftly that she reached the gate before him.

"Allan, my dear boy, what is it? Have you been sent home sick?" and taking both his hands in hers, she looked anxiously in his face.



"I have been sent home, Aunt Carrie, but not sick," he said with an effort to speak cheerily.

"But you are sick. I see it in your face, child. And sent home, you say. What do you mean?"

"I have been sent home in disgrace; but I declare to you, Auntie, it is on a false charge. *You* must trust me, whoever else doubts me. You will believe what I say, Aunt Carrie; no matter how much circumstances tell against me, won't you?"

"Certainly I will, my boy," she said, bending to kiss the earnest face. "But come in, and tell me all about it. How came 'old Al,'" and she smiled as she quoted his school-name, — "how came 'old Al,' such a steady old man as he, to have any serious charge laid at his door?"

"Come in, and I will tell you all I know," he said, "but that is very little. There is Mr. Leonard at the window."









"Why, Allan Haywood, what brings you home at this time?" said the minister, hurrying down the walk to meet them.

"This will tell you more than I can," said Allan, handing to him Dr. Drayton's letter. "But, Mr. Leonard," and he grasped his hand almost painfully, "don't condemn me unheard as he has done."

"Don't fear, my boy," he answered kindly; and sitting down upon the step of the piazza, he opened the Doctor's note, while Allan and Mrs. Leonard passed on into the house.

Allan was not long in telling his story, and he was just drawing to its close when Mr. Leonard came in with the open letter in his hand.

"This is a strange thing, Allan," he said; "some one has been using you most shamefully."

"He has been telling me the story," said Mrs. Leonard. "And it seems to me, Horace, that Dr. Drayton might have seen very easily



that the plot has been rather against Allan than against Professor Bentley."

"So it strikes me," said her husband. "But read that letter, Allan, and see how well the Doctor's version agrees with yours."

The boy took the letter, and read it. It gave a perfectly correct statement of all the facts as they had occurred, although, of course, Dr. Drayton's firm conviction that he was the guilty party threw its coloring over the whole recital.

"I can find no fault with that, sir," he said, handing it to Mrs. Leonard. "Any one can see from it that he considers me guilty; but as facts seem to prove that, I cannot blame him. I think his injustice lies in expelling me from the school until such time as I can prove my innocence, when its proofs must, of course, be obtained in the school. He is very much attached to Professor Bentley; and I suppose that his indignation has



led him to this hasty course, for it is very unlike him."

"Do you suspect any one, Allan?"

"Not fairly, Mr. Leonard. I have a suspicion in my own mind, but it is too entirely without foundation for me to speak of it."

"Even to us?" said Mrs. Leonard.

"Yes, Aunt Carrie, even to you; for if I am not right, I should be doing some one a terrible wrong in breathing a suspicion of his having done such a miserably wicked deed."

No answer was made to this, and after a moment's silence, Allan said, —

"I want to send a note to Ned Churchill. Is Martin going up to the village?"

"Yes: there he comes now with the wagon. I will call to him to wait;" and Mr. Leonard went out to stop the man, while Allan wrote his few hurried lines.

"Why don't you lie down there for a little while?" said Mrs. Leonard, as he leaned



wearily back upon the sofa after giving his note to Martin. "You look completely tired out."

"I felt so before I saw you," said Allan; "but I am nearly rested now. I wish I could tell you, Aunt Carrie, how much good you and Mr. Leonard have done me. I was sure that I could convince you that it was all false; but I did not expect such perfectly unquestioning confidence."

"You might have expected it, my boy," she said as she arranged the sofa pillows more easily for him; "for you know that we never have had cause to doubt your word."

And as she sat beside him after he had fallen into a heavy sleep, she wondered how any one could doubt that honest, open face, which even in his sleep seemed to give the lie to the unworthy accusation.

The evening brought Dr. Drayton as he had promised. He had a long talk with Mr. Leonard, in which the latter did his



best to convince him of Allan's innocence; but the Doctor was not to be persuaded by any thing short of absolute proof, and as that was not in Mr. Leonard's possession, he made but little impression upon him. He listened respectfully to all that the minister had to say; but when all was said and done, his opinion was evidently unaltered. Of one point, however, Mr. Leonard did succeed in convincing him; and that was, if Allan were not in fault, the guilty person had done even worse than he was accused of doing; and that, in his absence from school, the boy could not have the faintest hope of discovering his enemy.

"That is so," said the Doctor, in his grave, passionless manner, when Mr. Leonard had at last forced him to allow that he had been too hasty in his punishment of the suspected boy. "What should you advise to be done in the case, Mr. Leonard? You would not counsel his readmission into the school?"



“I should most certainly advise it, if I thought he would return,” said Mr. Leonard, warmly. “If we have been over-hasty in our condemnation, we ought not to be over-slow to acknowledge it. But it would be a very trying thing for Allan to go back now. His position would be a terrible one for such a sensitive boy as he. Nevertheless, if you will consent, I shall do all I can to influence him to return to the Hall, for I consider that his only chance of righting himself. Have I your permission to propose it?”

“I must ask for a little time for reflection,” said the Doctor. “I wish to be just; but I cannot, as yet, see the slightest reason to alter my judgment. You shall hear from me to-morrow evening;” and, with a very stiff bow, the Doctor left the house, feeling more uncomfortable than he would have cared to confess; for, cold and stern as he was, he was most sincere in his desire to deal fairly and justly by his scholars.



## VII.

### PATIENT WAITING.

THE question of Allan's return to school was not left either to his own decision or to that of Dr. Drayton. He had quitted the library quite early that evening, saying that he was very tired, and had been but a few moments gone, when a sharp cry startled both Mr. and Mrs. Leonard, and made them run quickly into the hall. Allan was sitting on the stairs with his handkerchief held to his mouth, bending over as if cramped with pain. It needed but one glance to tell them what had caused the cry which had brought them to him; for a dark, crimson stream was staining the white handkerchief, and as they reached him the boy sank back fainting on the stairs.



“I knew how it must end,” said the Doctor, as an hour later he stood beside the bed to which Allan had been carried; “but I did not think things had come to such a serious pass as this. Has he been exerting himself beyond his strength, or been under violent excitement?”

“He has been much excited all day,” said Mr. Leonard, “owing to a difficulty with Dr. Drayton in school; but I don’t know that he has made any undue exertion, except that he walked over from the Hall this afternoon; and he has often done that.”

Allan had been forbidden to speak, but the Doctor saw something in his face which made him say, “If you have suffered any heavy strain, lift your hand.”

The hand was lifted, and then fell slowly back upon the bed.

“I thought as much,” said Dr. Buford; “but we will have him all right again soon. This is a mere temporary affair, and with such



care as Mrs. Leonard will give him, he will be out again in a day or two. But I would give up school for the summer, my boy. That comes hard, does it?" he went on, noticing the pained, distressed look which came upon Allan's face. "Well, we will see. If you make haste to grow strong, I will let you go to work again."

"Is he fond of study?" asked the physician as he followed Mr. Leonard into the library when he had left Allan. "He looked so very unhappy when I spoke of his leaving school that I was sorry I had made the suggestion."

"No: he is not remarkably studious; but he has had a somewhat rough experience there, poor fellow!" And the minister went on to give the story of the morning.

"But how came he to be so unwilling to let them handle the book containing the paper?" asked the doctor, on whose impartial mind the suspicious circumstances of the occurrence had their effect.



“Because it contained some lines written by himself. What they were, I do not know; but he has quite a talent for poetry, of which he is exceedingly ashamed. Even I have seen only one or two of his pieces, and those under protest. It seems that on Saturday, something had occurred which suggested these lines, and he wrote them off, and laid them in an Euripides which he was using at the time in preparing his lessons for Monday. The extra task which Dr. Drayton imposed upon him hurried him very much; and in that way, I suppose, he forgot to put his own composition in some more private place. At any rate, it was still lying in the book when Mr. Acton examined it; and Allan supposed that it was this paper which Dr. Drayton requested him to read to the school. If you had any idea of the boy’s exceeding reticence and shyness with regard to his poetic effusions, you would not wonder at his being completely overcome with embar-



rassment and annoyance at the idea of a private paper being subjected to the criticism of such good-hearted but somewhat unmerciful judges as any body of school-boys would prove. No, no: our boy is innocent in this affair; and if you could hear him tell his story, you would be as sure of it as we are."

"I dare say," said Dr. Buford. "It seems strange indeed to think of Allan as guilty of such an outrageous trick."

"But as to the boy himself, doctor? Is this hemorrhage from his lungs?"

"I fear it is, Mr. Leonard. I must let you into his secret, now that it is of no use to keep it. He came to me on Saturday, and asked me to examine his chest, saying that he was quite sure his respiration was seriously impeded from some cause. I did so, and found reason to fear that his lungs were in a very bad state; but as I had lent my stethoscope to a neighboring physician, I was unable to make a thorough examination; and



he engaged to come to me next Saturday for a more intelligent verdict as to his condition. He bound me by a promise not to speak of his visit, which I gave on condition of his giving a counterpromise that he would himself tell you what I had to say after next Saturday's examination by the stethoscope. He did not want to worry you, he said, with any useless fears. But for himself, he pinned me down closely to an answer, and I was forced to confess that his chance for a long life was very small. With good care, however, he will rally from this attack. You must keep him cheerful, and try to banish this unhappy affair from his mind as much as possible."

"That will be a very difficult matter, doctor; for it has wounded him most deeply," said Mr. Leonard, sadly. "But we will do all we can. We have always been very anxious lest he should have inherited this from his father; but he never even whispered



a suspicion of his failing health or strength, and, although he has always been a delicate-looking boy, he seemed as well as usual."

"I know it. I was greatly surprised when he confided to me how far the trouble had progressed, but even then I did not anticipate such a sudden change as this. He has probably had some strain, perhaps a fall, or something of the kind; and that, added to the excitement of this accusation, has prostrated him. I will call early in the morning;" and the doctor took his leave.

To Ned Churchill, that week of anxiety passed on slowly enough. The rules of the Hall, with regard to leaving the institution on any day but Saturday, were most stringent; and though Mary kept him constantly informed of Allan's returning strength, he longed so much to see him, and assure him, with his own lips, of his unshaken faith and trust, that it seemed as if he could not wait for that far-off Saturday. But at last it



dawned; and as soon as breakfast was over he mounted his horse, which Thomas had brought over for him, and rode away to the Parsonage before going home.

A low whistle greeted him, as he threw himself from his horse at the gate. Looking up, he saw Allan at the window, and in another minute he was in his room. "I knew you would come to-day," Allan said; "but I did not hope it would be so early. What will Mary say?"

"Oh! I have seen Mary every day this week. But how are you, old fellow?" "Pretty jolly?"

"Very jolly since I have seen you," said Allan, smiling, holding both Ned's hands tightly in his as if he were afraid he would escape him. "But sit right down here and tell me all about things at the Hall. Are they any better? What do the boys think now?"

"They are all delighted that you put





Bentley down at last," said Ned, purposely misunderstanding him; for Mrs. Leonard had stopped him, as he sprang up the stairs, to warn him not to talk of the parody affair any more than he could help.

"That is not what I mean," said Allan, quietly. "I am very sorry that I had to do it; but when Bentley went so far, I had to put him out of my path in some way. But as to the other thing,—what do the boys say?"

It was a hard question to answer, with those anxious eyes watching him so intently.

"Oh, some of the stupid<sup>s</sup> think it was your doing," he said, as carelessly as he could; "but you needn't care for what they think. Little Charlie is strong on your side. He fights for you like a Trojan."

"Bentley, of course, is against me,—what, not Bentley!" he asked, catching a curious expression on Ned's face. "Does he think I am innocent?"



“I have not heard him say,” replied Churchill, evasively. “But he has some sense, if he is a crabbed old stick; so he must believe you.”

“And Bronson, Austin, and the rest of our set?”

Against him, every one of them. What could the boy say? He did not need to say any thing, for Allan saw his answer in his face.

“All doubtful, at least,” he said, with a little tremor in his voice. “Don’t think me a fool, Ned. I wouldn’t mind so much if it were only the dons who mistrusted me; but I can’t bear to have the fellows think me guilty. It would be bad enough to have them suspect me of such a mean trick as that was; but to have them think me such a liar! Oh! why can I not go back and search the thing out?”

“Don’t, Al! don’t!” said Ned, pleadingly, as Haywood started up from his chair. “Sit down, old boy. The thing shall be searched



out, I promise you. We'll be all right yet, Al. Only wait awhile."

"‘They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength,’" said a soft voice just behind them; and Mrs. Leonard, who had entered the room, came forward and laid her hand upon Allan's shoulder. "I have heard only Ned's last words," she said; "but I know what you must have been talking of. This will not do for you, dear boy. I thought that you had resolved to ‘commit your way unto the Lord, trusting to Him to bring it to pass.’"

"I had made up my mind to that," he answered, more gently. "But sometimes it almost seems as if I could not stand it. But I will try, Aunt Carrie. We won't talk of the doubters any more, Ned," he went on, as Mrs. Leonard left them alone again. "We will talk about little Charlie, who, I do believe, would hold fast by me through any and every trouble. He had been with me on Monday



morning, just before you came in, assuring me, with that earnest little face of his pressed close to my shoulder, that there was one boy in school who would never call me 'meek, and that was Charlie Grant."

"They will none of them be likely to call you that again, after your encounter with the Doctor," said Ned.

"I am not glad of that," said Allan, slowly. "As I told Charlie, I can see no reason to be ashamed of such a character; and if the boys understand that term as I understand it, I shall be sorry that I have done any thing to make them think me undeserving of it."

"What a strange boy you are, Allan!"

"In what way?" asked Allan, quietly.

"You are so brave. I am coming to think," he went on, comprehending at once Allan's quick look, "that you have been braver in your strong, patient resistance of the opinion of the whole school, than you would be in attempting to walk up the face



of Eagle Rock on a stormy night. But I must confess I do not understand you. Your temper is as quick as mine; your enjoyment of the fellows' good-will quite as great; and yet you keep control of the one, and set at nought the other, as if you were the tamest and most indifferent fellow that ever lived."

"I do love popularity, Ned; and I knew that my efforts to bear patiently with Bentley would not do much toward gaining it for me. But He whom I love, and whom I want to serve, loved those who strove to walk peaceably with all men, and gave them a promise that they should 'inherit the earth.' By that promise, I understand that He will give them that for which they long to do battle; that if they will bide His time, bearing all reproach and contempt, rather than right themselves by any unholy means, He will make their cause clear as the noonday."

"Then you mean to wait, and not to lift a finger in your own defence?"



“No: I mean to use my whole strength in my own defence. Christ never meant us to sit down idly, and let the world crush us at its pleasure. He did not intend that Christian men should have no rights; but He did intend that those rights should be maintained in a spirit of gentleness and kindness. When Bentley took my property out of my hands, and forcibly placed himself in the way of my duty, I think I did exactly what I should have done in putting him out of my path; but I had no right to do any thing more. If he had struck me, I hope I should have done no more than I did. In this other matter, I shall do my all to clear myself; but if, for that end, I must use any ungenerous means, I shall try to leave it wholly in God’s hands, and bear the shame as best I may. I shall be righted some day.”

“And you are content to wait?”

“I have a strong promise on which to build content,” he answered, smiling; “and I



must try to make my building as strong as its foundation-stone."

"And have you any clew on which to work?"

"Yes: I have one clew, but it is too slight for me to speak of, even to you. I cannot clear myself by throwing suspicion on another, unless I *know* that he is guilty."

The two boys looked at one another in silence, each knowing full well the thought that lay in the other's mind. After a while, Allan said, coloring deeply as he asked the question, "Did you find my papers?"

"Yes, but not in your book. They were on the floor, underneath your desk."

"Dropped for the third time, eh? I shall take care how I make a portfolio of a book again. My inveterate carelessness has been a sad fault for me this time. This will be a lesson for my life."

Ned handed him the papers; and, after glancing hastily over them, Allan was laying



them aside, when a thought seemed to strike him.

“Ned,” he said, “these lines were never meant for any eyes but mine; but I think that it may happen that your having seen them may be of use to me. Last Saturday, I took the advice which you have been giving me for so long, and went to see Dr. Buford. Don’t be startled. He only told me what I felt sure of before; and that was, that I was not likely to live to be an old man.”

Ned did not answer, simply because he dared not; but Allan felt the arm upon which he had laid his hand tremble beneath his touch.

“It is nothing much, Ned, only the thoughts that came into my mind after my talk with the doctor; but when you have read them, you will not wonder that, thinking this was the paper which Dr. Drayton had given me, I refused to read it before the school.”





Ned took the paper, and turning a little aside from Allan, read it.

### THE MASTER'S CALL.

They tell me a solemn story, but it is not sad to me,  
For in its sweet unfolding my Saviour's love I see.  
They say that, at any moment, the Lord of Life may come,  
To lift me up from this cloud-land, into the light of Home.

They say I may have no warning, I may not even hear  
The rustling of His garments as He softly draweth near,  
Suddenly — in a moment — upon my ear may fall  
The summons to leave our homestead, to answer the Master's call.

Perhaps He will come in the noon-tide of some bright and  
sunny day,  
When, with dear ones all around me, my life seems bright  
and gay ;  
Pleasant must be the pathway, easy the shining road,  
Up from this dimmer sunlight into the light of God.

Perhaps He will come in the stillness of the mild and quiet  
night,  
When the earth is calmly sleeping 'neath the moonbeam's  
silvery light,  
When the stars are softly shining o'er slumbering land and  
sea, —  
Perhaps, in that holy stillness, the Master will come for  
me.



I think I would rather hear it—that voice so low and sweet—

Calling me out from the shadows, my blessed Lord to meet,  
Up through the glowing splendors of a starry, earthly night,  
To “see the King in His beauty” in a land of purer light.

It seemed to Allan a long while before Ned turned toward him again. When he did, it was to lay his hands upon his shoulders, and looking full in his face to say,—

“Allan Haywood, last Monday morning I called you a coward. I believe that is the first lie my lips have ever spoken. To-day, I tell you, as I shall tell all who know you, that you are the bravest fellow Edward Churchill has ever seen.”

“Thank you,” said Allan, earnestly. “That has done me more good than all the medicine in the land could have done.”

It really seemed so; for when Mrs. Leonard came up to his room, shortly after Ned had left it, she noticed at once a change for the better in his tell-tale face.

“Ned’s visit has done you good,” she said.



“One can see that at the first glance. What has he been doing to brighten you up so much?”

“Trusting me, that is all; but it is enough,” was Allan’s answer. “If they all would do that until I have a chance to defend myself, I could be patient with this weakness.”

But all did not do that; and Allan was made to feel day by day that even his nearest friends were at least doubtful of his innocence. Laurence Bronson, Frank Austin, and some others, came to see him, and were kind and friendly in their manner; but none of them made any allusion to his trouble, and Allan, feeling sure that if they had trusted him they would have given him the support and comfort of their sympathy, was as silent on the subject as they.

Another circumstance had occurred which seemed to add a link to the chain of evidence which was forging itself against him. On his return from the Parsonage on Monday



evening, Dr. Drayton had sent for Allan's Euripides in order to ascertain for himself whether the boy had been correct in telling Mr. Leonard that the book contained some lines of his own. Of course, he did not find them; and the boys of his class were called into the study, and asked, one by one, if they knew any thing of the missing papers. Edward Churchill promptly acknowledged their possession, hoping thereby to silence all farther questionings; but the Doctor was not so easily satisfied.

"Did you find them in this book?" he asked, lifting the Euripides from the table beside him.

"No, sir. His note told me they were lying in it, but I found them on the floor beneath his desk. They must have been dropped there."

"Humph!" said the Doctor. "Young gentlemen, can any of you throw any light on this painful subject? Bronson, you are



much in Haywood's company. Can you give me any help? Can you assure me that you, for one, have no reason to suspect him, other than the occurrences which took place before me in the school-room?"

Laurence hesitated. Edward gave him a quick, impatient look, which, unfortunately, the Doctor caught.

"I will have no collusion here," he exclaimed angrily. "I must come to the truth of this matter. Bronson, answer my question. Yes or no?"

'That paper, with the one word "Parody" written on it, danced before Bronson's troubled eyes; but not for worlds would he have said a word to injure Allan.

"I cannot answer," he said at length. "I am in the dark."

"And the darkness in which you stand has thrown another shadow over Haywood," said the Doctor. "You would have done as well to have answered simply, 'No.' The class is dismissed."



They passed quietly out, the conviction fixed on almost every mind that Allan was guilty, and that Churchill and Bronson were in some way cognizant of his misdemeanor.

So day after day passed on, and week after week. Allan's spirits, at first hopeful and bright, began to flag and sink beneath the weight of suspicion against which he was powerless to contend. Dr. Buford saw, with disappointment, that he did not rally as he had hoped he would do from his attack. He regained sufficient strength to ride out, and even to walk for a short distance; but there he seemed to pause.

"It is all this miserable affair at the Hall which is keeping him back," said the doctor to Mr. Leonard one afternoon. "Suppose you take him away for a few weeks?"

"No," said Allan, who had entered the room and caught the last words. "If you are talking of me, I cannot leave Graydon until I have cleared myself of this charge. It



would do me no good. Don't order me away with this rope about my neck, doctor. It is this which is choking me, and the knot can be untied only here."

"Well, perhaps you are right," said the doctor. "But it seems a hard knot to unravel."

"Yes; but it will be unravelled in time," said Allan; "and I will try to wait patiently."

And so he did wait, and wait in patience too. But it was weary work,—work that took the brightness from his eyes, and the color from cheek and lip.

## VIII.

BEN THOMPSON.

THE effect, even on Allan's life, of the circumstances connected with his expulsion from school, was scarcely less marked than that produced upon Edward Churchill. As week after week passed on, and nothing was discovered, his bright and cheerful face grew more and more dark and clouded, and his whole manner and disposition seemed to be growing gloomy and morose. Even Laurence Bronson and Frank Austin, his sworn allies, could do nothing to draw him out of his reserve and depression. They did not believe fully and entirely in Allan's innocence; and so, feeling injured, impatient, and angry on his account, he "left them to their





folly," to use his own words. Poor fellow! if there had only been something, however little, that he could have done, it would not have been so bad; but to sit patiently down and wait, was something which was quite out of character in Ned's case. Every sense was perfectly on the alert to discover some clew, however trifling, which might tend toward the explanation of the strange mystery; but eye and ear, and all else, were alike baffled so far. No watchfulness or care had brought him a single step farther than he had been on the day of Allan's disgrace.

Meantime, Allan was failing very fast; and the doctor's orders that he should be taken from the scene of his trouble were now imperative. It was the first week in June; and the boy, in spite of his extreme unwillingness, was to leave home some time during the next week. He had confided his anxiety to Ned, saying that he knew he would only be the worse for the journey; and Churchill was



almost in despair, for he loved Allan as if he were his own brother.

It was Saturday; and determining suddenly, when on his way home, that he would go over to the Parsonage and urge one more plea against the journey, begging Mr. Leonard to postpone it, at least, for another week, he sent Thomas back with his horse, saying that he preferred to walk. Turning off from the road, he took a side-path leading through the woods, which would shorten his walk to the Parsonage by two miles, at least.

But he had scarcely taken more than a step or two in this new direction, when he again altered his course; for coming down the narrow pathway directly towards him, walking with slow step and bent head, he saw Arthur Bentley. In his present mood, there was no one in the world whom he would less gladly meet. The path was so narrow that one must stand aside for the other to pass, and, of course, words of one kind or another must



be spoken between them. To speak courteously to him was out of the question for Ned at that moment, and he turned into the bushes, not having been noticed by Bentley, intending to wait until he should have passed by, and then to go on his way.

Bentley came slowly on. For some weeks he had seemed to avoid his companions more than ever; and Ned, who watched him closely, had seen him, more than once, walking alone in this absorbed, preoccupied manner; and suspicions, already aroused, were not allayed by his appearance. That something was weighing heavily on his mind, no one who saw him could doubt; and Ned felt morally sure that he knew what that something was. As he stood looking at him, completely hidden by the thick shrubbery, he heard another step following Bentley's, and the next moment a rough voice, close at Arthur's side, said, "Mr. Bentley, hold up a minute."



“What a guilty start!” thought Ned, as Arthur, turning quickly, faced the speaker.

But it did not need that one should of necessity be guilty of crime because he started at being suddenly addressed by such an ill-looking fellow as the boy whom Arthur now confronted. They both knew him well; for he had served as stable-boy at the Hall, and had been dismissed for dishonesty some weeks before.

“What do you want of me, Ben?” asked Arthur, sharply. “I am in a hurry.”

“Didn’t seem so,” said Ben, with a low, ugly laugh. “Was taking things pretty slow I thought. Any thing on your mind, Mr. B.?”

Bentley’s face grew red with passion, then paled again, perhaps with terror, but he answered hotly, “You will do well to behave yourself, Ben Thompson, or you may be called up for theft yet.”

‘The fellow laughed again, more insolently



than before; and Ned wished most heartily that he were out of his hiding-place.

"Perhaps I might be called up, sir, and then perhaps I mightn't. There's worse things done in the world, Mr. Bentley, than taking a few oats from a rich man. We all know what's gone on in the Hall, and some on us knows more than the rest. There's a Drayton boy, sir, as lies a dyin' with the blame of another feller's doin's fixed on him. I wonder how that other feller feels, Mr. Bentley?"

Arthur turned white under the gaze of those half-shut, squinting eyes; and he answered, more wrathfully than before, "What do I care for your wonder? Let me pass you: I will not be kept here;" and he attempted to push past him, but Ben threw himself still more effectually in his path.

"Perhaps you'll care more when you see this;" and he held a crumpled paper towards him. With a cry, Arthur sprang



to catch it; but his adversary was too quick for him.

"No, no, sir. Not yet," he said, tauntingly, holding it behind him; but he did not know his foe.

In a moment, Arthur had thrown himself upon him, borne him to the ground, and wrested the paper from his grasp. At the same time, Ned, unable longer to bear the position of a spy, came out and stood on the pathway beside them; but neither of the two combatants saw him.

"Have you any other papers?" asked Arthur, in a low, fierce whisper. Not a threat did he utter; but the coward who lay beneath him, terrified by his sudden overthrow, saw enough in his face, and he quailed before him, frightened as a child.

"Yes, yes," he gasped: "only let me up, and I will tell you. I only wanted to make a little something out of them, Mr. Bentley. Say you'll give me a dollar, and I'll give 'em



up. I found 'em here in this very path the day the Doctor raised all the fuss."

Yes: he remembered it well. How he had gone out to destroy the packet of papers, and, on coming to the water in which he had meant to sink them, had found the packet gone. He remembered it all. His sickening terror, his search, and then the certainty which had gradually grown upon him that they had been irrecoverably lost.

But Ben knew nothing of all this. He saw nothing but the colorless, dark face above him, heard nothing but, — "Where are the others?" asked in a tone of concentrated fury, which fairly made him quake with terror.

"At home. Oh, Mr. Bentley! let me up. I'll bring them to you, every one."

Bentley did not fear but that he would keep his word, for the craven face was absolutely abject in its fear; but he added the one inducement which, as he knew, would have weight with the covetous boy.



“Go and get them at once. If you bring them to me untouched, I will give you two dollars. Here, on the spot. You promise?”

“I promise.”

Bentley released him from the tight grasp in which he had held him all through, and, rising to his feet, allowed him to rise in his turn.

“Now go,” he said, “and I will wait until you come back. Be quick;” and he watched him, as he slunk off, with unutterable contempt written on every feature of his face.

But, after all, what was there to choose between the two? The one, stalwart, strong, and handsome,—the other, small, weak, and evil in look; but the same mean, pitiful spirit dwelt in both.

“You do well to look scornfully after that wretch, Arthur Bentley. But how do you suppose Drayton boys will look at you?”

If a voice had sounded from the sky, Arthur Bentley could not have been more utterly





appalled. He had thought himself entirely alone; and turned to find Ned Churchill close at his side. Not another word was spoken. For a moment, the two boys stood and gazed at one another, — fierce determination in the one face, utter desperation in the other. The next moment, Arthur had sprung like a tiger upon Ned.

But he had no cowardly Ben Thompson to deal with now. Ned's natural strength was nearly equal to his own; and Ned was fresh, while he was in part exhausted by his effort to control Ben's struggles. They went down together, but Ned was uppermost.

"Bentley," he said, with great effort forcing himself to speak quietly, "promise on your honor that those papers shall be given by Ben to me, and I will let you up. If not, you lie here until I can obtain help. Will you promise?"

"No!" came the answer, sharp and loud. Ned's reply was a long, shrill, piercing call.



Little Charlie Grant, coming singing down the main road, heard it, but could not tell whence it came. He tried to imitate it, and succeeded so well that Ned heard him, and calling again and again, guided him to the spot.

The child stood still in utter bewilderment, as, dashing into the pathway in wondering haste, he saw Bentley stretched upon the ground, and Ned holding him down.

“Why, Churchill!” he exclaimed. “Two Seniors! What will Dr. Drayton say?”

“Hush, Charlie. Do just as I tell you, and we’ll save Allan yet. Don’t stop to question, but rush down to old Jacob Thompson’s, and tell him to keep Ben a prisoner at home until I come; and don’t let him destroy any papers. Tell him Allan Haywood’s life depends on it. Fly now, little fleet-foot. Mr. Acton has gone to the village. If you meet him, send him here.”

Not an instant did Charlie wait for ques-



tion or parley. Allan — his beloved Allan — might yet be saved ; and he might aid in the work. Surely those little feet, renowned in the school for their swiftness, never flew over the ground so rapidly as they did on that bright June morning. Only once they paused. Meeting Mr. Acton near the village, he stopped, and directing him to the spot where he had left Ned, told him simply that he was needed there, and rushed off again on his errand. He was just in time. As he burst into Jacob Thompson's cobbler-shop, Ben was leaving it. The little fellow put out his hand to stop him, for he was fairly breathless.

“ My father's in the shop. He'll attend to you,” said Ben, gruffly, trying to pass him.

“ I — don't — want — your — father. — Stop — a — minute.”

“ I can't wait: I'm in a hurry,” said Ben ; and he tried to drag away his sleeve which Charlie was holding tightly.



“What’s the matter here?” said the cobbler, coming out from his shop, attracted by the noise. “In trouble again, Ben?” and he looked anxiously from his son to Charlie’s crimsoned face.

“O, Mr. Thompson!” gasped Charlie: “don’t let him go. Mr. Churchill says to keep him here till he comes. It’s something about Allan Haywood: I don’t know what. Oh, keep him, keep him!” he entreated, for Ben’s arm was forcing itself from his grasp. “Somehow Churchill expects to clear Allan. Don’t let him go;” and the excited, wearied child burst into an agony of crying.

“Go into the shop, Ben; and if I find you’ve had to do with this business of Mr. Haywood’s, you’ll suffer for it,” said his father, sternly. “And you, Master Grant, don’t take on, but come in too. What’s it all about? My boy’s a bad boy, but I can’t believe he’s had any hand in this business. Somebody’s played Mr. Haywood a mean trick, and a



wicked one too; but what could my Ben have to do with it?"

"Ay: I'd like to know?" asked Ben, roughly: "what do you mean to turn on me for?"

"I don't know," said Charlie, "what it all means myself. All I know is, that Churchill and Bentley have had a quarrel over it, and that Churchill told me to rush over here to keep Ben from leaving until he should come. And he told me, Mr. Thompson, to tell you that Haywood's life might depend on it, and that you was to be sure not to let Ben destroy the papers."

"What papers?" asked the father.

"I don't know: that's all he said. He was holding Bentley down, and couldn't say much."

"Ben Thompson," said his father, "you've brought evil enough on me already, but if you've had any hand in this matter, it will go hard with you. If you have papers that Mr. Churchill wants, that's any way con-



nected with the thing, you had best, for your own sake, give them up at once. The folks at the Manor House are the last people in the world for us to anger after all their kindness to us when we were sick and poor. What have you got, boy, that Mr. Ned wants?"

It was always Ben's principle to be on the winning side. He had given his promise to Arthur Bentley to deliver the papers into his hand, but that was when he felt himself completely in his power. Now it seemed Arthur was on the losing side of the battle, and his father's face looked very hard and severe. He hesitated, and in his hesitation his father saw his guilt.

"Give me the papers instantly!" he said, seizing him by the shoulder.

"But Mr. Bentley promised me two dollars for them," whimpered the boy; "and they're his, anyway."

"I don't care whose they are. They're his for no good if he had to buy them from



you, you young good-for-nothing! Give them up, or I'll search you on the spot."

And so it happened that when Edward and Mr. Acton arrived at Thompson's shop, their work was done for them. Thompson handed Edward the packet of papers, beseeching him to spare his son, if Haywood could be vindicated without his punishment; and Edward promised; "for, Mr. Ned," said the honest man, "I've always done my best, and kept my name up, poor as I am."

Dr. Drayton was walking slowly up and down the length of his study, deep in thought, when a loud rap at the door startled him out of his reverie.

"Come in!" he said, and Mr. Acton and Edward Churchill answered the summons.

The Doctor looked somewhat surprised, for he was quite aware that Ned had purposely avoided, so far as possible, all intercourse with him since Allan's dismissal from school.

"May I have ten minutes' conversation



with you, sir?" asked Churchill. "It is very important."

"Certainly," replied the Doctor, stiffly.

There was nothing very encouraging in his tone, but Edward went on, unheeding, —

"There is a packet of papers, sir, belonging to Bentley of our class. I do not know what they are; but they relate in some way to Allan Haywood."

"How did they come into your possession?" asked the Doctor, coolly.

Ned told him all that he knew from the moment of his leaving the Hall until that in which Thompson had given the papers into his hand. Dr. Drayton stood and listened to him in silence, and when he had ended his story, asked quietly, "And this is all that you know about these papers? You have not seen them, nor heard what they contain?"

"No, sir. I *know* nothing. I only believe."

"You may have reason to *suspect*, but you





have no right to *believe* until you know more," said the Doctor. "Send both the Bentleys to me; and you, Churchill, remain within call."

But when they had left the room, the Doctor sat suddenly down, and leaning his head on his hands almost groaned out the words, "Oh, if I had but trusted him! Poor boy! poor boy!"

For full two hours after he had conveyed Dr. Drayton's message to the elder and younger Bentley, Edward Churchill sat waiting in a little room adjoining the study, without being summoned to confront the two brothers. He could hear, from time to time, the sound of the Doctor's voice through the partition wall, deep and stern, but never raised to a loud key; and once he heard the voice of Professor Bentley speaking passionately, whether to the Doctor or his brother he could not tell. After a while, the door of the study opened, and closed again, and some



one — Arthur, he thought — passed slowly through the hall, and up the stairs. A few moments after, Dr. Drayton's heavy step crossed the floor, traversed the hall, and came to the door of the room in which he sat waiting. It paused there for a moment, and when at length he entered the room Edward wondered if he had been forced to wait to recover composure, for the expression of the Doctor's face was strangely changed since he had last seen it.

“Churchill,” he said, as the boy rose to meet him, “I have kept you waiting here unnecessarily. I had supposed that your evidence might be needed in this wretched case. But I was mistaken. Bentley has confessed every thing; not in penitence, I fear, but the papers you placed in my hands convicted him beyond a doubt, not only of having written that parody, but of having forged Haywood's handwriting in order to accomplish his expulsion from the Hall. The packet



contained the first rough draft of the parody in Bentley's own hand, corrected and revised, and various other papers in which he had imitated Haywood's writing. Some of them were perfect imitations, fac-similes of the writing in an old composition of Allan's of which he had gained possession."

Edward stood and listened in silence, as the Doctor said all this in a low, sad voice, whose gentleness told the depth of his distress. As he had sat there waiting, he had imagined to himself his interview with Dr. Drayton after Bentley's conviction,—for convicted he knew that he must be. He had pictured his own triumphant bearing as his master owned himself in error, and his proud assertion that he had always known that Allan would be proved innocent. But as he listened to the quiet voice, and looked up into the troubled face, he felt any thing but triumphant. He stood a moment, wondering what he ought to do, and then spoke out his sympathy by



saying simply, "I am so sorry for you, sir."

"Yes," said the Doctor, in the same low tone. "You may well be sorry for me, my boy. There is no sadder heart to-day in this village than mine. God grant that my terrible mistake may not have shortened that poor boy's life."

They stood together in silence again for some moments; and then the Doctor said, laying his hand on Edward's shoulder,—

"I owe it to you, to make you the bearer of the good tidings to Allan. Tell Sam to saddle my horse for you, and ride over at once."

Edward hesitated. He longed to be the herald of such glorious news, but—could it be that his feeling of something near akin to hatred of his master had changed so entirely? Yes, it was so. In his intense pity for the man whose heart was almost broken by the news which had been such a perfect joy to



him, he said, "Go over yourself, Dr. Drayton. It will be a comfort to you. I will see Allan later."

"No: I hardly know whether it would be a comfort to see him in the fulness of his first delight," said the master. "It would only show me how deep his grief has been. No: you have been true to him all through, Churchill. Go to him now, and tell him, if you can, how bitter my sorrow is. I will see him toward evening."

## IX.

### REPARATION.

ALLAN HAYWOOD was lying on the couch in the sitting-room, idly watching Mrs. Leonard's busy fingers as they stitched rapidly away at her sewing, and listening as idly to the music of her sweet voice, as she sang softly over her work. He was supremely happy that afternoon, for Dr. Buford had, in the morning, given his consent to his remaining at home. "Simply because he is too far gone to be helped by the change," the doctor had said, in answer to Mr. Leonard's inquiries; "and we may as well let him have his own way during the few weeks he has to live, if it be any comfort to him."

Allan knew he was worse, for he had seen



the look of anxiety in the doctor's face when he had examined his lungs that morning; but even if he had heard the words spoken to Mr. and Mrs. Leonard, taking from them the last remnant of hope, he would have been just as content. So long as he might remain at home, he was happy.

"Who is that?" he asked, as the clatter of a horse's hoofs sounded on the road. "Some one is coming on the gallop. Why, it is Ned! See how flushed and excited he looks," he added, as his friend rode past the window to the door. "And on Dr. Drayton's horse too! Oh! Aunt Carrie, something must have happened."

"Don't do so, Allan dear," said Mrs. Leonard, laying her hand on him, as he started up with flushed face and trembling hands: "you are so on the watch for some news that the least trifle destroys all your composure. Do wait, my boy."

"I think I have not much longer to wait,



Aunt Carrie," he said, excitedly. "I am sure, quite sure, that Ned has come with good news. Oh, there he is! Well, Ned?"

Ned had intended to enter very quietly and soberly, and to begin his story very deliberately, slowly progressing by degrees to its climax; but that delighted, expectant face, the outstretched hands, the joyous voice, scattered all his rhetoric to the winds. He hesitated, then began to speak, and hesitated again, looking helplessly at Mrs. Leonard, afraid of exciting Allan, and not knowing how to proceed.

"Tell me," said Allan, quietly, his composure returning instantly at sight of Ned's confusion. "I think I know all about it. Ned, am I cleared?"

"Yes," said Ned, desperately: "Fully and entirely cleared!"

He did not spring up nor cry out. He only turned his face to the pillow, and lay very still. Not a word more was spoken for





many minutes; then he lifted his face, and laid his hand on Ned's.

"How did you do it?" he said, with a bright, happy smile.

"How do you know I did it at all?" said Ned, smiling back at him. "But it is a miserable story to tell," he went on gravely. "You have been most awfully treated, Allan; but I do believe I am as sorry for Dr. Drayton as I am for you." And then he told him all the story.

"I knew it must come right," said Allan, when Edward ceased speaking. "Poor Dr. Drayton! Far-seeing and perfectly just as he generally is, this must be very hard upon him. And Bentley too! How the fellow must feel!"

"Bentley indeed!" exclaimed Ned, indignantly. "He'll know what it is to be expelled now. And he'll be followed by the hatred of the whole school besides. Even Will Seaton, his sworn ally and defender,



says that he will never speak to him again. If any thing could make me sorry for Bentley, it would be Will's throwing him off; for I do believe that Seaton is the only person in the world, besides his brother, whom Arthur loves. But it is no worse than he deserves, the miserable scamp!"

"Hush, Ned, hush!" said Allan, gently. "I can't help but pity him."

"*I* can, and help it very easily too. If he were sorry, you might pity him; but the fellow don't care a fig about you, Allan. He'd let you suffer this right over again if he could."

"Perhaps he is more sorry than the Doctor thinks. He was always very reserved and proud, you know, and he would hide his feelings if he could."

"I don't believe they'll be so overpowering that he'll find much trouble in hiding them," replied Ned, almost angrily.

Allan laughed a joyous little laugh.



“ Well, never mind Bentley. I am so happy that I’m ready to think the best of everybody and every thing. You’ll let me be sorry for the Doctor, won’t you ? ”

“ Yes,” said Ned, pleasantly. “ I can’t say a word there, for I’m so sorry for him myself. Poor old Doc! He’ll find it pretty hard to come down to an apology. I’d like to hear what he has to say to you.”

But neither Ned nor any one else, save Allan himself, heard what Dr. Drayton had to say. He came into the house shortly after Ned had left (the boy having hurried home to tell Mary the joyful news), with the two Bentleys; the Professor having insisted upon Arthur going with them, and asking Allan’s forgiveness.

Ronald Bentley’s anger, mortification, and really sincere grief, when he found out the truth with regard to Allan, could scarcely find words in which to express themselves; and his scathing scorn fell like a tempest upon



Arthur's unhappy head. No words were too hard or cruel for his use; and the boy was almost stunned by the storm which had so suddenly, and, so far as his brother was concerned, so unexpectedly broken upon him. But instead of subduing or awing him, it seemed only to render him hard and reckless. He had remained quietly in a lonely room, according to Dr. Drayton's orders, ever since his interview with him, and had as obediently followed his brother, when commanded by him to accompany them to the Parsonage. And now, when met in the hall by Mr. Leonard, he stood looking the image of dogged resolution, plainly quite determined to brave it out to the end.

Mr. Leonard looked surprised, as well he might; but Dr. Drayton, coming quickly forward, said, — "Professor Bentley felt that he must see Allan, if only for a moment. But — but — would he be willing to see me alone?"



This hesitating, embarrassed, almost timid man, — could it be Dr. Drayton of Drayton Hall? If Mr. Leonard had seen him a moment later, when he entered the sitting-room where Allan still lay upon the sofa, he would have been even less able to identify him with his ward's calm, self-poised, immovable teacher.

Allan rose to meet him with a beaming face, but Dr. Drayton, hurrying forward, put him gently back.

“Do not rise,” he said. “I have only come — only come — I want to say” — And then the strong, set face broke, and he bent over the boy with a great sob surging up from his very heart.

“Oh, Haywood, Haywood!” was all he said.

“Don't try to tell me what you want to say, Doctor,” said Allan, laying his thin hand on the master's shoulder. “I know what it is. I am very, very glad and thankful.”



“And I am sorry, grieved to my very heart, Haywood, that I have been so fearfully mistaken. Can you forgive me? Through all the years of my life as a teacher, justice and impartiality have been the virtues which I have aimed most earnestly to exhibit,—the virtues to which I had vainly flattered myself I had attained. And now” —

“And now you are showing that you have not flattered yourself, sir. This has been a terrible grief and sorrow to me, Dr. Drayton, and I confess I thought you too severe; but I have never doubted, for a moment, that my old friend was a noble, true-hearted man.”

“And you can forgive him?”

“I can. I have already forgiven all who have had any thing to do in the matter. It is time for me to forgive every one who has ever done me any wrong,” he added gently. “You know that, I suppose, Doctor?”

“Yes,” he said, very sadly. “Allan, tell me truly this one thing. Was this trouble



fixed upon you before the time of your unjust punishment?"

"Yes, sir, it was," said Allan, looking frankly into his face. "Fixed beyond any thing more than temporary alleviation. Do not distress yourself with any such mistaken idea as that this has brought my illness upon me. Now, Doctor, will you do me one favor?"

"I wish I could do you a hundred," was the quick response.

"Thank you. One will do," said Allan, with a smile. "Keep Bentley in the school. Don't expel him."

"He is already expelled," said Dr. Drayton, his face darkening; "at least, so far as his own knowledge of the fact goes. He is to be publicly disgraced at the first session of the school on Monday."

"Where will he go? What school will take a boy who has been expelled from Drayton?"



"None, I presume. Bentley knew what he was doing; now he must suffer its consequences."

"And all his fine talents will be thrown away and wasted. Dr. Drayton, you will drive him to despair."

"While you stand and plead for him," said the master, with a husky sound in his voice which gave Allan some hope. "Will you see Professor Bentley? He would like to speak with you for one moment."

"Let him come," said Allan. "He will help me to plead for his brother."

Professor Bentley was a hard, unrelenting man, but he was an honorable gentleman; and it was with a face crimsoned with shame that he spoke his few words of humble apology for the unwittingly cruel part he had played. Allan's forgiveness was as quickly spoken.

"Professor Bentley," said Dr. Drayton, as soon as Allan had finished speaking, "Haywood has been asking a favor of me. He





would have me recall Arthur's expulsion from the Hall."

"And I would have you hold to it. I will never give my consent to such recall. He has proved himself a false, low, mean fellow. Let him consort with such, and not with gentlemen."

His face was terrible in its wrath, but Allan was determined to win his point.

"Mr. Bentley," he said, "you would not refuse a drink of cool water to a dying man, I know. I am dying."

"And thirsting for this cooling draught," said Dr. Drayton, gently. "Bentley, let him have his way. I will call Arthur."

"Is he there?" asked Allan. "Then please leave me with him." And they went away, and sent Arthur to him.

What passed between the two boys, no one ever knew. Arthur remained in the sitting-room but a few moments; and when he came out, he did not speak save to answer



his brother's hastily spoken question, "Did you ask his forgiveness?"

"I did not need to," he said. "It was given."

## X

### THE "STARRY NIGHT."

TWO weeks had passed quickly by, and again, on one beautiful Saturday morning, Edward Churchill was riding rapidly over the road lying between the Hall and the Parsonage. But now his face told no story of eager gladness and joy; for a messenger had come to him from Mrs. Leonard, to tell him that Allan was dying, and wanted to see him.

Those two weeks had been days of perfect happiness to Allan. Restored, of course, to the full confidence and friendship of his old companions, and treated by all with a loving tenderness which strove to make up for past coldness and injustice, the boy's sick-room



had grown a little Paradise to him. Mr. Leonard had feared that the excitement and revulsion of feeling might prove too much for his fast failing strength; but it seemed rather to nerve and invigorate him. For the first ten days after the discovery of Bentley's plot against him, he had steadily gained in strength and appetite, and his wan face had seemed to fill out, and to lose its look of pallid whiteness.

"Oh! Allan will get well, won't he, Mrs. Leonard?" little Charlie Grant had asked only yesterday, as he leaned on the arm of Allan's chair. "He does look so bright and well."

And Mrs. Leonard answered hopefully, that she thought he might, at least, grow strong enough to go up to the Hall, and see them all some day.

Charlie had been his first visitor after Dr. Drayton and the Bentleys. Early on the Sabbath morning following, he had asked



permission to stop in before Sabbath school with Ned; and Dr. Drayton, ready to grant any request which might give pleasure to Allan, had given his consent. Since then, he had been as much with Allan as his school-duties would permit; and no little ten-year-old nurse could have been more careful and tender in his attentions, nor more enthusiastically hopeful of his patient's recovery.

But for the last day or two, Allan had been slowly sinking back into the weakness and lassitude from which he had been so suddenly roused. "You are looking very tired and exhausted," Mrs. Leonard had said to him the night before, as she gave his pillows a last touch before she lay down to rest on the sofa in his room.

"Yes," he had answered wearily. "The bed feels very comfortable. Perhaps I had better not attempt to leave it again."

He had been comparatively quiet all night, and just at dawn she lay awake, listening for



any sound from him, and hoping from his stillness that he might be sleeping comfortably, when a little choking sound which she had heard once before, and which she knew only too well, made her spring to her feet in terror. He raised himself in the bed, and put his hands over his mouth, but the crimson tide would not be stayed.

The only word he spoke, when at length he opened his eyes, was — “Ned;” and Dr. Buford, who was sitting beside him, whispered hurriedly, —

“Send at once if he wants him, or it will be too late.”

“So soon,” said Allan; and then he shook his head with a curious, incredulous little smile.

And he was right. The gentle Angel of Death paused on the threshold through all that day. They knew that he stood there, but he did not enter in. Hour after hour passed on, and Ned still sat beside his friend,



their hands clasped close ; and still, although Allan could only speak a word from time to time, the angel stood waiting.

It was growing toward dusk when he moved his hand in Ned's clasp, and whispered, " Will you give me this one gift ? "

" What is it ? " asked Ned, tenderly as a woman speaks to her dying child.

" Forgiveness for Arthur. "

" O Allan ! " He bent his face down upon the pillow. Allan lifted his hand, and laid it upon his forehead.

" My poor Ned ! 'Tis a costly gift, but I want it so. "

The dusky twilight passed on into the night, a glorious night of cloudless sky, beautiful with brilliant stars ; and yet the face upon the pillow had given no answer. By and by Allan spoke again, —

" I am so tired, " he said. " Lie down beside me, Ned, and let us sleep, as we used to sleep together at school. "



Ned rose, and lying down at his side put his arm about his neck, and kissed him. "I will try my very best," he said; "but, oh! Allan, it is very hard."

"Yes," said Allan; "but I know that you will do it, for 'thy love to me is wonderful, passing the love of women.'"

He lay very still, looking out of the open window; and Mrs. Leonard stole away, thinking he might sleep if alone with Ned. But she had scarcely left them, when he said, "What were the exact words of my poor old song, Ned? Do you remember?"

"I think I had rather hear it, that voice so low and sweet" —

"I think I would rather hear it, that voice so low and sweet,  
Calling me out from the shadows, my loving Lord to meet;  
Up through the glowing splendors of a starry, earthly night,  
To see the King in His beauty in a land of purer light,"

repeated Ned.

"Yes, it would be very beautiful," said Allan, his voice sinking low again, "To





step from glowing star to glowing star until we find ourselves standing in the glorious light of His face. I am so tired, Ned. Let us go to sleep."

Turning a little, he laid his hand on Ned's shoulder, and seemed to fall into a quiet slumber at once. Ned listened a few moments to his gentle breathing; and then, wearied out with his grief, fell asleep beside him.

Mrs. Leonard, watching in the next room, came in at last to look at the two boys. She stood beside the one for a moment, bent and kissed the white, still face; then leaning over Ned, softly spoke his name. He opened his eyes, and held up his finger warningly.

"He has had his wish," she whispered tenderly. "He has gone from the shadows, through the glowing, starry night, to see the King in His beauty."



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